

High-level talks slated for Amman economic summit

WASHINGTON (USIA) — Senior U.S. officials are gearing up for intensive discussions in the next fortnight with key participants in the upcoming Middle East/North African Economic Summit in order to finalise the charters of three key institutions that are expected to be launched at the conference opening in Amman on Oct. 29.

The institutions were called for by the Casablanca Declaration, issued after the first regional economic conference of its kind, when Israeli and Arab governments and business people held unprecedented talks about regional economic development.

They are the Middle East Development Bank, the Regional Business Council, and the Regional Tourism Board. A fourth institution, the Executive Secretariat, is already operational in Casablanca, the venue of the first Middle East/North Africa Economic Summit.

The upcoming meetings will take place in Cairo, Amman, Rome and Madrid to prepare the groundwork for the three-day economic summit in the Jordanian capital. U.S. officials are hoping that the Amman Economic Summit in the wake of the Middle East peace process "can serve as an impetus for economic change" through private-public partnership.

At the Cairo meeting, due to end on August 31, participants are expected to finalise the charter and bylaws of the Regional Tourism Council, formally known as the Middle East-Mediterranean Travel and Tourism Association (MEMTTA).

Judith Barnett, a senior adviser at Department of Commerce, will take part in a meeting, tentatively scheduled for early next month in Amman, for the task force charged with drawing up the charter and bylaws of the Regional Business Council.

The Council is envisaged to be a private, non-profit association which seeks to promote and facilitate regional trade and investment.

Under-secretary of State for Economic, Business and Agricultural Affairs Joan Spero is also scheduled to hold talks with Jordanian government leaders on the Amman Economic Summit and other bilateral investment issues.

The Steering Committee which oversees the final preparations for the Amman meeting, which is expected to attract as many as 1,000 participants from about 60 countries, is scheduled to hold a session next month, probably in Madrid. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs Toni Verstandig is expected to again lead the U.S. delegation.

Susan Levine, senior vice president for Policy and Investment Development at the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, is scheduled to travel to Rome around the middle of next month for a crucial meeting of the task force on the Middle East Development Bank, which reportedly still faces lingering opposition from some European and Gulf states.

Where these institutions will be headquartered is still undetermined, reliable informants said, although there has been talk that the proposed bank may end up in Cairo, the business council in the West Bank and the tourism board in a North African state, possibly Tunis.

The Executive Secretariat will continue to be in Casablanca in recognition of Morocco's hosting of the first Middle East/North Africa Summit.

Because of the importance of tourism to the region and the large part it already plays in the economies of the countries of the region, the Regional Tourism Board is the least controversial of the institutions which will be launched at the Amman meeting.

Jordan's situation is a case in point. In the year since signing the peace treaty with Israel, Jordan has seen "a mini-boom" in tourism — about 50,000 from Israel alone, and at least 12 international hotels are being built or proposed in various parts of the country, particularly in Aqaba, Petra and Amman.

Tourism receipts are expected to total \$1 billion by the end of next year, according to one Jordanian estimate.

The tourism board will seek to promote the tourism industry in the region through educational training and through establishment of a standard rating system American AAA hotel rating standard.

In an interview, Judith Barnett explained that the functions of the proposed Regional Business Council have yet to be determined, although it is generally agreed that it will serve as a "communicator" of information between companies throughout the region on trade shows, trade missions, proposed tariff changes, etc.

Barzan Tikriti assails Uday, defector

LONDON (Agencies) — Barzan Ibrahim Al Tikriti, half brother of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, has deepened the family rift in Baghdad by launching an open attack on the leader's eldest son and heir-apparent Uday.

"If everyone knew their own size and ability, many problems would be avoided. The direction towards the inheritance of power in Iraq is unacceptable," Mr. Tikriti said in an interview to be published on Thursday.

Mr. Tikriti, himself often rumoured to be a potential defector, compared Uday to the "greedy, unfit for power" relatives who defected to Jordan in early August but warned the West not to count on President Saddam, even as his family fortress crumbles.

"He won't run away from responsibility. If he relinquishes rule things will only get worse. Iraq needs someone to be a vortex of power, someone who can gather people around him. The regime won't fall and he remains in place."

Mr. Tikriti, who is believed by Western officials to control much of Iraq's finances from the Swiss banking centre, lashed out at both the family members who have already fled Baghdad and at President Saddam's controversial son.

Fear of Uday was believed to play a role in the stunning defection of an entire wing of President Saddam's family, including his son-in-law and former close aide Hussein Kamel Hassan.

The paper quoted Mr. Tikriti as saying that Uday "has no better than Hussein Kamel and that both are greedy, unfit for power and unaware of their limitations."

Iraqi opposition leaders were hoping to meet in London next week and want Hussein Kamel to fly in from Amman to attend. The Foreign Office said it had not yet received a request for a visa and would not say if one would be granted.

Many of the key players in the disparate Iraqi opposition movement, while welcoming a split in President Saddam's inner circle, said they had no plans to attend the proposed meeting.

Their reticence has cast doubt on chances for a successful, consolidated push to topple President Saddam. "Saddam has problems but I wouldn't write him off yet," said a British official.

Mr. Tikriti dismissed long-running speculation that he too was about to abscond but did not rule out opposing from within. "Iraq is not a monarchy," he was quoted by the newspaper as saying. "If I oppose, I will do it in my own special way."

Mr. Tikriti also said Hussein Kamel was "a major cause of the tragedy" now facing Iraq, accusing the defector of "leading opposition within the Iraqi government, to the U.N. Special Commission" in charge of disarming Iraq.

He also "ordered Iraqi soldiers to open fire on U.N. inspectors in mission in Iraq in 1992," Mr. Tikriti said.

He charged that Hussein Kamel wanted to become president. Hussein Kamel had only been "a driver in the presidential cortege before being promoted by the president to positions he doesn't merit. Now he's looking to become head of state."

Security on the Turkish side of the porous 330-kilometre border has increased in the past week because of clashes between the PKK and Iraqi Kurds in north Iraq.

Troops with binoculars scanned the border in Turkey's Sirtak province on Thursday as Super Cobra helicopters hovered overhead, witnesses said.

The PKK, fighting for independence or autonomy in southeast Turkey, last week emerged from its mountain camps in north Iraq to attack targets held by Iraq's Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP). The Turkish Kurd rebels are apparently trying to increase their influence in the KDP-run region.

The Iraqi Kurdish group denied that a meeting it held with Turkish civilian and military officials on Thursday was a prelude to joint action against the PKK in north Iraq.

"The people in northern Iraq have been behind us during these attacks and it is something we have to sort out ourselves," the KDP's Turkish representative, Safer Dizayee, told Reuters.

Turkey has sent thousands of troops into northern Iraq against PKK bases there twice this year. More than 17,500 people have died inside Turkey in the PKK's 11-year insurgency.

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IRA 'disappointed' with Britain on ceasefire day

DUBLIN (R) — The IRA voiced "deepening disappointment" Friday that its year-old ceasefire had failed to win its political arm, Sinn Féin, a place at all-party Northern Ireland peace talks.

The guerrillas said in a statement one year to the day after they silenced their guns that British Prime Minister John Major had failed to grasp an opportunity for a political settlement.

Yet the statement made no reference to any possible resumption of a 25-year war against British rule which the guerrillas halted last Sept. 1 to try to win a reunited Ireland through political dialogue.

"Regrettably, and after a full year, this opportunity has not been grasped by the British government. It is a matter of concern that the British have succeeded only in preventing movement towards a resolution," the guerrillas said.

"The failure of John Major's government to face up to its responsibilities is the source of deepening disappointment to all those who seek a just and lasting settlement," it said.

The IRA did not mention moves by Britain and Ireland to set up an international commission to deal with the surrender of IRA and Protestant loyalist guerrilla arms, the issue which has brought the year-old peace process to a standstill.

Mr. Major and his Irish counterpart, John Bruton, are expected to propose setting up the body at summit talks in Britain next Wednesday called to breathe new life into what they say is the best ever opportunity for a settlement.

Sinn Féin said Thursday that it would reject such a body if it turned out to be another attempt by Britain to

disarm the IRA and loyalists before an overall political settlement had been negotiated by all parties to the conflict.

Britain and Ireland hope that the internationalisation of the arms issue may break the deadlock caused by the guerrillas' refusal to hand over any arms until the shape of a new "agreed Ireland" is worked out at the conference table.

The Irish Times reported that former U.S. Senator George Mitchell, President Bill Clinton's Ireland advisor, had been asked to head the commission and had tentatively agreed.

There was no independent confirmation of the report, which would bring Washington directly into the Anglo-Irish peace process for the first time.

Northern Ireland's unionist parties, representing the views of the 60 per cent Protestant majority which wants the province to stay British, insist that they will never sit down with Sinn Féin while the IRA holds on to its arms.

The IRA arsenal includes ground-to-air missiles and semtex explosive which Britain and the Unionists fear could be used to resume the war against Britain anywhere in the world if the guerrillas were not satisfied at the outcome of peace talks.

"Amongst other diversions, London is using the Unionists' political intransigence as an excuse for its own refusal to move," the IRA statement said.

"Irish Republicans recognise that a lasting peace settlement must involve all the Irish people and will require a democratic accommodation among all the people of this island."

It was the guerrillas' second statement since its Aug.

31, 1994 declaration of a "complete cessation of hostilities."

Last November the IRA issued a statement disowning a fatal robbery in the border town of Newry which it blamed on a maverick IRA unit. One postal worker was killed, the only fatality directly linked to guerrilla violence in one year.

Meanwhile several hundred Irish Republican Army supporters launched mid-night protests throughout Northern Ireland to coincide with the first anniversary of the IRA cease-fire.

The anniversary has put a focus on the dashed hopes of quick political progress and the risk that the cease-fire could break down as a result.

Peace activists provided a poignant reminder Thursday of the cost of Northern Ireland's violence. An electronic billboard in a main South Belfast square displayed each of the nearly 3,200 names of people killed during the past quarter-century of "troubles."

This time last year Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams declared to a crowd of cheering Catholics that the IRA was lowering its guns to create space for peace negotiations.

The disillusionment and bitterness of Adams supporters went on display as protesters marched at midnight or shortly before to British army bases in Belfast, the second-largest city, Londonderry, and other Catholic parts of this British-ruled land.

No serious injuries were reported as protesters carrying "all party peace talks now" placards faced off with police in riot gear at several venues.

Sinn Féin councilors stepped in as tempers flared, ordering children to stop

throwing stones at police even as adults shouted abuse at the generally impassive lines of officers.

"People are extremely disappointed and distressed that a year after the IRA's courageous decision, the British still refuse to accept our right to play an equal part in democratic life," Adams said as he marched down the main thoroughfare in Catholic West Belfast.

In Omagh, 100 kilometres west of Belfast, police arrested one protester late Thursday and dragged others off the main street after they staged a sit-down protest and tried to scale the perimeter fence of an army base.

Earlier, protesters in Dublin scaled the fence at the British embassy there and briefly chained themselves to a railing before Irish Police forced them back out.

Britain insists that the IRA commit itself to disarm before Sinn Féin enters negotiations with pro-British Protestant parties. Those parties deeply distrust the Sinn Féin-IRA movement despite the truce.

Mr. Adams said he hopes the Wednesday summit near London between Mr. Major and Mr. Bruton will resolve the deadlock.

"The summit between Mr. Bruton and Mr. Major is key to ensuring that none of us slip back into the situation that we've just come out of," Mr. Adams said, noting that otherwise he could not "see a way out of this crisis."

Spokesmen for loyalist paramilitary groups, which stopped killing Catholics in mid-October, said Thursday they were willing to disarm if the Catholic-based IRA made the commitment first.



Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams addresses peaceful protesters gathered at a police station in West Belfast on the first anniversary of the ceasefire in Northern Ireland (AFP photo)

DNA identifies last czar's bones

WASHINGTON (AP) — Bones unearthed in a shallow grave are beyond doubt those of Czar Nicholas II, DNA experts announced, clearing the way for the ceremonial burial of the Russian emperor executed 77 years ago by a revolutionary firing squad.

But the three-month U.S.-Russian investigation did not deal with another vexing question: did Czar Nicholas' daughter, Princess Anastasia, somehow escape the Bolsheviks' bullets?

Army Lt. Col. Victor W. Weeda, who runs the DNA laboratory for the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, told a news conference Thursday of the results of the DNA testing.

"A great murder mystery spanning most of the decade is solved," he said.

Agreed Pavel Ivanov, Russia's premier DNA scientist: "Beyond any reasonable doubt, the remains are those of Czar Nicholas and his family."

Col. Weeda said DNA from the bones perfectly matched DNA taken from the skeleton of Czar Nicholas' younger brother, George, who died at age 28 of tuberculosis in 1899. His skeleton was exhumed from a royal crypt last year.

The last of the ruling Romanovs were executed in 1918. The bodies were dumped into a pool of sulfuric acid 20 miles (32 kilometers) outside of the Ural Mountain city of Yekaterinburg.

The grave was located by a Russian geologist and a Moscow film-maker in

1979. Twelve years later, the bone fragments were unearthed.

Investigators identified them as the remains of the czar, the Czarina Alexandra and three of their five children, as well as their doctor, valet, cook and maid. No trace was found of one daughter — either Anastasia or Marie — and the sickly son, Alexis.

If the DNA results are accepted as conclusive, church and state authorities in Russia will have to decide whether to rebury the remains at Yekaterinburg or in St. Petersburg, the final resting place of Romanov czars and empresses for more than 200 years. And church authorities will also have to decide whether to canonise the royal family as martyrs.

The burial had been scheduled for March in St. Petersburg, but delayed to allow the new investigation.

"We'd like a proper Christian burial," Prince Rostislav Romanov, a London investment banker and grandson of Czar Nicholas, told historian Robert Massie, author of a forthcoming book on the royal Romanov family.

The new evidence did not satisfy all skeptics. Emigre Eugene Magerovsky, a retired Russian military intelligence officer, interrupted the news conference to say he was suspicious of how the bones "suddenly" came to light during the Soviet era.

"The Soviets have always been masters of all kinds of shenanigans," he said.

Japan orders cult bank account frozen

TOKYO (AP) — A court has ordered a bank to freeze an account held by the Aum Shinri Kyo doomsday cult, in the first victory for families of cult victims who are seeking compensation, officials said.

The order came in response to an appeal from family members of seven people killed in an attack using sarin nerve gas last June in the central Japanese town of Matsumoto.

Cult leaders face murder charges in that case and in the attack with sarin this March 20 on Tokyo's subways, which left a dozen people dead and thousands

of others sickened. The victims' families in Matsumoto are demanding 550 million yen (\$5.6 million) in compensation from the cult. Victims in the Tokyo case and several others are also seeking compensation.

The court decision to freeze the account in a Sakura Bank branch at Fuji-Yoshida city, near the cult's huge compound at the foot of Mount Fuji, was made several weeks ago but kept secret until Thursday, when the account was actually frozen.

It was unclear how much money was in the account,

but news reports said it was designated to receive 920 million yen (\$9.3 million) from the town of Naminoson as part of an out-of-court settlement with the cult for vacating the town.

They said 70 million yen (\$714,000) was deposited into the account Thursday as part of that settlement.

Other lawsuits are expected to be filed soon against the cult as relatives of cult believers seek the return of huge donations. The cult is believed to have pressured members to turn over assets held by their families.

Environmentalists warn of possible nuclear catastrophes in Russia

MOSCOW (AP) — Top environmental experts have warned that crumbling safety, poor training of workers, overflowing waste storage facilities and old equipment could lead to new nuclear disasters in Russia.

"We may have new Chernobyls," said Robert Tilles, chairman of the International Chernobyl Fund for Nuclear Safety, a non-government ecological group monitoring radiation safety.

In April 1986, reactor No. 4 at the Chernobyl nuclear plant in Ukraine exploded in the world's worst nuclear disaster, spewing a deadly radioactive cloud across Europe.

Of Russia's 29 operating

nuclear reactors, 11 are the same type as the one that exploded in Chernobyl. Efforts to modernise them have faltered, Mr. Tilles said. At the same time, reactor workers often lack the necessary training to safely operate the facilities.

"We can only hope that the fatal combination of events, which led to Chernobyl, won't happen again," Mr. Tilles said.

Experts warned that the main danger comes from Russia's 160 research reactors, 53 of which are located in Moscow. Many of them date back to the 1940s and the 1950s and are obsolete. Another serious problem is the lack of capacity to

store the used nuclear fuel and other radioactive waste. The situation is especially alarming in the European part of Russia, where the waste storage facilities of three nuclear plants are filled almost to capacity.

"At the Kursk and Leningrad plants, the waste storages are filled to 95-96 per cent," said Vladimir Kuznetsov, head of the Russian Nuclear Emergency Prevention Centre. "In violation of the basic safety regulations, these plants even don't have a place to unload fuel from their reactors in case of an emergency."

Liz Taylor and husband separate

LOS ANGELES (R) — Hollywood legend Elizabeth Taylor and her seventh husband, former construction worker Larry Fortensky, have separated after nearly four years of marriage, the couple has announced. "We both need our space for a while, so we have agreed to a trial separation. We both hope this is only temporary," they said in a joint statement. Mr. Fortensky, 43, has reportedly moved out of Taylor's exclusive Bel-Air mansion and the couple is now living apart. The latest twist in Taylor's tumultuous love life came with no advance signs her marriage to Fortensky was on the rocks. The 63-year-old actress has curtailed her appearances since she had hip replacement surgery in June, and she suffered a major business setback this week when the launch of her newest perfume, Black Pearls, was abruptly cancelled. Taylor, who started off as a child actress and rose to become one of Hollywood's most glamorous stars, met Fortensky in 1988 while both were patients at the Betty Ford Centre for Drug and Alcohol Treatment outside Palm Springs, California. Nearly 20 years her junior, Fortensky was constantly at Taylor's bedside when she was admitted to the hospital and nearly died of viral pneumonia in April 1990. After her recovery, the romance flourished.

Credit card 'condoms' make students think before they spend

GREENVILLE, South Carolina (AP) — First, there was safe sex. Now, at Clemson University, there's safe spending. School officials are urging students to slip "condoms" over their credit cards to make them think before they charge. The condoms are simple sleeves of paper carrying financial advice: "Keep this 'condom' over your credit card," they warn. "The few seconds it takes to get the card ready for use can reduce the urge to spend, spend, spend... And then you'll have money to save and invest." The credit card condom is produced by the National Centre for Financial Education and is designed to be an attention grabber, said Nancy Porter, a family resource management specialist with the Clemson Extension Service. "We're concerned that these college students are really getting themselves in over their heads before they even have a chance to learn how to manage their money," she said.

Garcia dies smiling

NEW YORK (AP) — Jerry Garcia died smiling. "It's strange to say, but he looked so peaceful," Deborah Koons Garcia wrote about her rock guitarist husband in the Sept. 21 issue of Rolling Stone. "I said to the guy at the funeral home, 'Look, he's smiling. Did you do that to him?' and he said, 'No, that's exactly the way I found him.' His face was so at peace." The magazine invited Ms. Koons to write a column after Mr. Garcia died of a heart attack Aug. 9 at a drug rehabilitation clinic at age 33. The Grateful Dead leader decided last summer to confront his heroin addiction, his widow wrote. "It's a pain in the butt... I don't want to do it for the rest of my life," she quoted him as saying.

JFK's 1945 diary goes to print

NEW YORK (AP) — A diary written by John F. Kennedy during a visit to post-war Europe — including his impressions of Hitler's bunker and German women — has been discovered and will be published in November, Publisher's Weekly magazine said. The magazine's news editor Maureen O'Brien said the 152-page book printed by Regency Publishing will appear Nov. 22, the 32nd anniversary of Kennedy's assassination.

Hutu refugees slam new Rwandan government

NAIROBI (R) — The leading opposition group among Hutu refugees Friday denounced a cabinet shake-up in Rwanda as strengthening the hand of hardline Tutsis and the Tutsi-dominated army.

In a communique to AFP here, the Rally for Return and Democracy (RDR) said the regime had been radicalised and was now "dominated by the hardline wing of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF)." It was the RPF which led a fightback to end the genocide in Rwanda last year in which Hutu extremists killed more than half-a-million Tutsis, moderate Hutus and their families.

President Pasteur Bizimungu Thursday named as prime minister, Pierre-Celestin Rwigyema, a 42-

year-old Hutu, to replace Faustin Twagiramungu. He heads a reshuffled cabinet of 21 ministers.

One of the key changes was the appointment of a moderate at the head of the key Rehabilitation Ministry, responsible for resettling refugees, in the place of a man many considered a Tutsi extremist.

Political analysts saw that as an encouraging sign at a moment when the two million Hutu refugees who fled retribution after last year's ethnic bloodbath are too terrified of reprisals to return. The RDR said the reshuffle and arrival of "unknown" personalities in the cabinet would not "inspire confidence and reassure the Rwandan population and in particular the refugees."

"The refugees are follow-

ing the developments in the Kigali regime with concern," it added.

"There is a great risk the new government will pursue the hard line traced by extremist RPF elements who are using all means to prevent dialogue with the refugees on the conditions of their peaceful return," the RDR said.

It called on the international community to make sure the Rwandan government responded to the needs of the refugees and Hutu majority within the country. However it said it feared the government would "pursue attacks against the refugee camps in Zaire and export war to that country, which already suffers enough from the presence of so many Rwandan refugees."

The new cabinet has the same ethnic balance as the old one, with a majority of Hutu ministers, but refugees have denounced many of them as collaborators.

Mr. Bizimungu fired Mr. Twagiramungu, who resigned at more or less the same moment — Monday, accusing him of failing to cope with post-war problems.

Mr. Twagiramungu, for his part, wrote a resignation letter condemning killings by the Tutsi-dominated army and arbitrary arrests, and accused the Tutsis of failing to live up to power-sharing accords.

The crisis underlined the deep ethnic divisions that continue to gnaw at Rwanda.

The new cabinet has the same ethnic balance as the old one, with a majority of Hutu ministers, but refugees have denounced many of them as collaborators.

Opposition says Kazakh referendum vote invalid

MOSCOW (AFP) — Kazakh opposition groups Friday declared invalid the official result of a referendum on a new constitution giving President Nursultan Nazarbayev greatly enhanced powers to push through economic reforms, Interfax News Agency reported.

Officials from the Communist Party, Labour Movement, the Human Rights Committee and several other organisations said only 34 per cent of the electorate

turned out to vote Wednesday — well below the minimum requirement of 50 per cent or the 90.51 per cent announced by the Central Electoral Commission.

According to the official result, of the 90.51 per cent who voted, 89 per cent favoured boosting Mr. Nazarbayev's powers.

The opposition groups carried out a separate count of voters, with some 1,500 observers posted at 644 polling stations, said Oleg

Abayev, head of the Kazakhstan Human Rights Committee. Yuri Kim, head of the Electoral Commission, rejected the opposition claim as "biased".

"You cannot draw general conclusions on the referendum using some data from some isolated observers," he said, adding that 10,253 polling stations had been set up for the vote.

He said none of the nine foreigners invited to observe the referendum had reported

any election irregularities.

Sam W. Brown, head of the U.S. delegation to the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), however said the referendum was "another backward step for democracy" in the central Asian republic.

The new constitution will allow the president to dissolve parliament and choose ministers without needing the approval of parliament.

Sarajevans wonder why it took NATO so long

SARAJEVO (R) — Sarajevans craned their necks Friday to catch a glimpse of NATO war planes roaring through the skies above the city and wondered aloud why it had taken the jets so long to bomb Serb targets.

"I am convinced the West has finally decided to bring peace here but I wonder why it has taken them so long," said 58-year old Mustafa Balic, a professor before the war.

"You can see it does not take such a big effort. Every bomb on Pale (the separatist Serb 'capital' east of Sarajevo) will speed up the peace process. I wish I could be a NATO pilot for just one day."

NATO jets and U.N.

artillery began pounding Bosnian Serb targets around Sarajevo Wednesday in retaliation for a Serb mortar bomb which killed 37 people and wounded 85 others in the city earlier in the week.

More than 500 air sorties and 1,000 artillery rounds later the Serbs were reeling from more punishment in three days than they had received in 40 months of war against lightly armed Bosnian government forces.

Bosnian Serb army air defences, arms factories, storage depots, communications and command and control facilities were being systematically destroyed with virtually no response from the Serbs except for the

downing of a single French plane.

Besieged Sarajevans rejoiced in one breath and in the next damned the West for hesitating so long to aid a city where Serb shells and sniper fire have killed more than 10,000 people and wounded another 50,000, most of them civilians.

"The only message we have to NATO is to carry on, carry on and bomb their savage brains out, not in hatred but because that is the only way to bring an end to the deaths of innocent civilians in this city," said housewife Samija Esmamovic, 42.

For Said Jamakovic, a 36-year old soldier in the Bosnian army, which has fought the Serbs without heavy

weapons because of an international arms embargo, the NATO attacks were a deliverance.

"Thank God the international community finally got serious and realised the only thing the Chetniks (Serbs) understand is force," he said.

"I'd give my life to see them running away from the bombs in Pale. Now the time has come for them to see what it's like to be on the receiving end."

"I can't even sleep these days because I am constantly waiting for new strikes. Believe me, the more strikes there are the more cooperative the Chetniks will become."



The pilot car leading the entourage of Punjab Chief Minister Beant Singh stands destroyed after a powerful bomb blast killed Mr. Singh and 12 others in Chandigarh, India (AFP photo)

India tightens Punjab security after chief minister's assassination

CHANDIGARH, India, (R) — Indian security reinforcements were reported rushing to Punjab Friday after the chief minister of the state and 12 of his retinue were killed in a massive bomb blast.

Indian newspapers reported that top explosives and anti-sabotage experts were also travelling to the state after the blast, which blew up Chief Minister Beant Singh outside the state government headquarters Thursday. Sikh militants claimed responsibility.

The remains of Mr. Singh, a Sikh from India's ruling Congress Party who became chief minister in 1992, were only identified from a foot in a shoe and his religious bangle, a senior police officer said.

Punjab witnessed a bloody insurgency by Sikh separatists in the 1980s which climaxed in an army assault on the Golden Temple at Amritsar and the subsequent assassination of Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards.

Police said the bomb appeared to have been placed in Mr. Singh's armoured official white car as it was parked outside the administrative headquarters of Punjab and Haryana. The two states share the capital Chandigarh.

The blast took place shortly after 5 p.m. (1130 GMT). "There was a car parked outside the secretariat building. It was fitted with a time bomb and it went off," a police spokesman told Reuters.

Police said pieces of flesh and limbs had been found on the first floor of the government secretariat building. The reception area of the 10-storey structure took the brunt of the blast.

Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao expressed shock and outrage at the "barbarous act".

"Such acts of terrorism can only be perpetrated by those who have taken leave of their senses," he said.

Police sealed off the city after the explosion and set up roadblocks to try to prevent the escape of the attackers.

In 1992, Beant Singh formed the first elected government in Punjab after direct rule from New Delhi for five consecutive years because of the separatist violence.

Kant accepted his resignation. Mr. Ramakrishnu used the special session of the assembly to inform legislators that Mr. Kant had asked Mr. Rao to remain chief minister until a new government is formed. After 15 minutes, the special session was adjourned.

In a separate development, India has rejected the latest demands by guerrillas in Kashmir for the release of three jailed Pakistani militants in exchange for four Western hostages they are holding, officials said Friday.

As talks aimed at securing release of the hostages entered a critical stage, officials said Al Faran militants holding the foreign tourists made their demand during negotiations with Indian officials by radio Thursday evening.

The guerrillas, who earlier this week complied with demands from the authorities for proof the hostages were alive and well despite death threats, had indicated their patience was wearing thin and wanted a reciprocal gesture from India.

Al Faran has offered to release American Donald Hutchings, German Dirk Hasert and Britons Keith Mangan and Paul Wells if India freed 15 militants from prison.

The four, as well as Norwegian Hans Christian Ostroe who was found beheaded two weeks ago, were seized in July.

Women's forum declares war on fundamentalism

HUAIROU, China (AFP) — Activists attending the World Women's Forum here Friday declared war on religious fundamentalism, accusing male extremists in Iran, India and Bangladesh of manipulating religion for political gain.

At a heated debate here ahead of the fourth U.N. World Conference on Women, delegates at the international grass-roots meeting said fundamentalists had hijacked religion, taking it out of the private domain and into the political arena.

They urged women to fight extremism by lobbying for equal rights and changes in the law.

"It is time to act," a delegate from a group calling itself the Defence Committee for Women in Iran. "The more we are, the more we (can) show our anger."

A representative from another association, Iranian Women in exile, urged women to "show their anger" at the Islamic hierarchy in Tehran.

Iranian women are not allowed to initiate divorce, which is a male prerogative, they said. Men are also allowed to take four or more wives — as well as temporary spouses — while women are effectively worth less than half a man under the law and are barred from certain jobs, they added.

Sudha Acharya, of the All India Women Conference, said religion had become "politicised and in many countries is used as an excuse for repression."

"Every religion has something positive to offer, but what men do with religion affects women's lives," she said.

The anger at the non-governmental organisation (NGO) Forum here may set the tone for the inter-governmental conference that will be launched in Beijing Monday.

There, representatives from liberal, Western countries are expected to stage a tense behind-the-scenes fight with delegates from conservative or Muslim

states and the Vatican over the conference's final communiqué.

Between 20 and 40 per cent of the draft declaration remains in dispute, much of it over calls for women to have greater control over their own fertility, but especially over a clause that implicitly accuses religion of holding back progress for women.

Zarina Bhatti, a delegate from the New Delhi-based Asian Centre for Organisation Research and Development, said the rising power of fundamentalists resulted from all-male religious hierarchies.

These excluded women from interpretation of scripture, and then used it to justify new religious rules, such as head covering, she added.

More and more Indian Muslims wear the veil, she said, which makes them vulnerable, reinforcing their traditional roles in life and urging them to stay at home.

In Bangladesh, "farwas" are being made in the name of religion and of patriarchy,

and this hinders the development of democracy," said a young Bangladeshi delegate who said she was repelled by people who opposed democracy and equal rights for women.

"Bangladesh came into the spotlight last year after a feminist writer, Taslima Nasreen, fled to the West when a radical Islamic group demanded that she be killed for supposed blasphemy."

"Religion has been manipulated for electoral aims," said Amrita Dass, an Indian historian who said fundamentalists "control and use women" and assail their rights.

Nor was the problem of fundamentalism restricted to Muslim countries in the Middle East and to the nations of South Asia. A delegate from the Jewish Women's Caucus said it was becoming "quite a problem" for women in Israel to seek a divorce, given the political power wielded by the ultra-orthodox Jewish lobby.

No passengers left on hijacked Sri Lanka ferry

COLOMBO (R) — Tamil Sea Tiger rebels who hijacked a Sri Lankan ferry with 144 people aboard earlier this week have taken all the passengers off the vessel, a Tamil party leader said Friday.

The guerrillas probably used the passengers to lure two naval vessels where they could be attacked, one with suicide frogmen armed with mines, said Douglas Devananda, leader of the Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP) which helps with the ferry service administration.

He said 15 children under the age of seven were on board the Iris Mona when it set sail from the eastern port of Trincomalee Monday.

Children under seven do not have to buy tickets and were not listed on the official Shipping Ministry tally of 121 passengers and eight crew.

Mr. Devananda said he thought the rebels had taken the passengers away for "inquiries" somewhere on the mainland, possibly in the Mullaitivu area.

"If (the LTTE) are fighting, it is something different," he told Reuters. "but why should they take this vessel? The Tigers have removed their mask. They have shown themselves for what they really are."

All communications between the vessel and the military, which has been monitoring its movements, have been cut.

The EPDP chief said monitoring of the rebel commu-

nications had shown suicide Sea Tigers had mined the Dvora fast-attack craft after it had approached the ferry.

Two Israeli-built Dvora were sunk, killing 21 navy personnel. The Tigers lost two trawlers carrying an estimated 60 rebels between them.

Mr. Devananda, whose once militant party now supports the government in its fight against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), described Monday's hijack as "wretched".

The Tigers have blocked civilians from travelling from the rebel-held north to the south and the government was considering blocking the south-north access, residents in north-central Vavuniya said.

Voice of Tiger radio transmissions, over which the LTTE publicises its military successes, had been jammed, residents said, suggesting that a military offensive was imminent.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said it was trying to contact the LTTE to find out what was going on aboard the ferry which is lying four kilometres north of Mullaitivu in the northeast, about 500 metres offshore.

"Somebody should take responsibility," said Marco Altherr, delegation head of the ICRC which has resumed escorting government food ships to the north with security guarantees from the armed forces and the LTTE.

The Iris Mona is chartered

by the government to carry civilians and the sick between Trincomalee and the northwest islands of Kayts and Karaitivu, off the rebel-held Jaffna peninsula, which are under government and EPDP control.

Defence officials say recent attacks by the LTTE, fighting for a homeland in the north and east, appear to be part of a rebel attempt to divert the army's attention from an expected offensive against the rebel stronghold of Jaffna town.

Meanwhile a U.S. State Department official in charge of South Asian affairs said Friday Washington would maintain a ban on arms sales to the island despite the new Sri Lankan government's progress in human rights.

"That is our policy. There are a number of reasons. Human rights concerns is one of them," said Robin Raphael, referring to a U.S. ban on the sale of lethal military equipment to Sri Lanka.

But the U.S. continued to sell non-lethal equipment under an on-going limited military assistance programme for Sri Lanka, said Ms. Raphael without elaborating.

Ms. Raphael, assistant secretary of state for South Asia, arrived here Thursday from Pakistan on a five-day visit as part of a South Asian tour that will also take her to Bangladesh.

The Sri Lankan government "has no problems in buying arms" for its war

effort, Ms. Raphael told reporters here.

Sri Lanka has stepped up arms purchases from key suppliers such as Pakistan and China to fight the LTTE.

In a reference to human rights in Sri Lanka Ms. Raphael said: "Overall we are clearly impressed. The government has committed itself to a high level of human rights," noting that a top probe was being carried out into a series of murders in the capital.

Police have detained several personnel from a police commando unit in connection with the killings of 21 people, whose decomposed bodies have been fished out of two lakes outside the capital since May.

President Chandrika Kumaratunga led her People's Alliance to victory at general elections a year ago by promising to eliminate alleged human rights abuses under the former United National Party (UNP) regime.

Ms. Raphael said that she discussed the renewed fighting between government troops and LTTE guerrillas with Foreign Minister, Lakshman Kadirgamar and also met opposition leader Ranil Wickremesinghe and Tamil politicians.

"My impression from these discussions is that the government would like to resume negotiations (with the LTTE)," Ms. Raphael said but added that it was the LTTE that had backed out of talks.

Hillary Clinton regains political limelight with trip to China

HONOLULU, Hawaii (AFP) — First lady Hillary Clinton prepares to go to China for one of her most difficult missions to date that will mark her return to the political forefront after months of keeping a low profile.

Mrs. Clinton, who arrived here Thursday to attend weekend ceremonies marking the 50th anniversary of the surrender of Japan in World War II, will be in Beijing on Sept. 5 and 6 to head the U.S. delegation at the United Nations fourth World Conference on Women that begins Monday.

The first lady's attendance at the conference was in doubt until Beijing allowed Chinese-born dissident Harry Wu to return to the United States last week, ending a two-month ordeal in which the U.S. citizen was arrested and convicted on charges of espionage.

Some critics still believe that despite Mr. Wu's release

Hillary Clinton's visit will send China the wrong message on its repressive policies. Mr. Wu himself shares this view.

But the first lady is no stranger to controversy as her strong personality has always been a magnet for White House opponents. For more than a year Hillary Clinton's pet project on health insurance reform was the target of Republican invective and public controversy.

The president and his wife were forced to drop the project, which the Republicans portrayed as an attempt to put health insurance under government control and which several opinion polls partly blamed for the Democrats' loss of both houses of Congress in the November 1994 elections.

Aware of her public image as a left-leaning feminist was damaging the party and her husband's prospects of reelection, Hillary Clinton

stepped out of the political limelight assuming the more traditional roles of a first lady.

Her comeback began in April with a tour of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The trip to Beijing, therefore, is not her first diplomatic mission, but the stakes are much higher on this trip.

The White House has tried to calm the critics by stressing that the first lady's visit to Beijing will be limited to the conference on women with no political overtones to China.

"This is a conference on women that happens to be in China," an administration official said, adding that the first lady would not meet with any Chinese leaders.

"She will be able to call attention to the many issues that confront women," he added.

The official acknowledged, however, that Hillary Clinton would always be the target of criticism "no matter

what she did."

The first lady herself said that she would be in Beijing "to focus world attention on the issues that matter most to women and families: health care, education, economic opportunity, political freedom and participation and human rights."

It is precisely on her handling of human rights issues that her trip to China will ultimately be judged.

"Mrs. Clinton has an obligation to express her country's contempt for (China's) steps (against participants to the NGO forum), the New York Times warned recently, referring to China's relegation of the meeting of women from the non-governmental organisation to Huairou, 50 kilometres (30 miles) northeast of Beijing.

"Anything less from the leader of the United States delegation would be a betrayal of American principles," the daily added.

Clinton inaugurates World War II commemorations

HONOLULU, Hawaii (AFP) — President Bill Clinton kicked off World War II commemorations marking the 50th anniversary of Japan's surrender and the end of the war in the Pacific, praising the triumph of "the forces of victory ... over tyranny."

Mr. Clinton spoke briefly at Hickam Air Force Base after arriving here Thursday with his wife, Hillary, to celebrate Friday and Saturday the 50th anniversary of Japan's surrender on Sept. 2, 1945.

Some 30 countries and territories who took part in the war in the Pacific will be present at the ceremonies, including Japan, who has since become a close U.S. ally.

Also attending will be China, the principal victim of Japanese aggression before the end of the war, who now in turn inspires mounting fear among some of its neighbours.

Japan's delegation will be headed by Defense Minister Seishiro Eto, while China's will be led by the commander of the Chinese military region of Guangzhou, General Li Xilin.

Mr. Clinton stressed that the choice of Hickam for his first speech was appropriate because "it was here — right here — that the guns of war shattered the peace of our land and drew America into the fight for freedom."

He was alluding to Japan's Dec. 7, 1941 air raid on the U.S. Pacific Fleet, which changed the course of World War II by drawing the United States into the fray on the side of Britain, as then U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt was strongly urging.

Some 231 aircraft were stationed at Hickam when Japanese warplanes suddenly appeared over the horizon with no previous declaration of war between the two countries.

Most of the planes were

destroyed or damaged in the attack, which coincided with a devastating bombardment of the Pacific Fleet anchored at Pearl Harbour.

"The long journey to reclaim freedom for the Pacific and for the world began from this very field," Mr. Clinton said.

"And it ended 50 years ago this week when the forces of freedom finally triumphed over tyranny," he added.

Mr. Clinton then touched upon what the White House said was the central theme of the upcoming tributes: the need for Americans to confront the problems of the 21st century with the same spirit of sacrifice that saved the world from fascism.

It was a theme Mr. Clinton amply dealt with in June of last year, when he attended the 50th anniversary of D-Day, the allied landing at Normandy, France.

"Today, we turn toward a new century, in a very different set of economic and

political and social challenges," Mr. Clinton said.

"We now must draw on the legacy of those who won World War I and built peace and prosperity afterward," he added.

The formal ceremonies will start early Friday with a military parade at Wheeler Air Force Base, which was also attacked by the Japanese 50 years ago — 33 men were killed, 75 were wounded and numerous planes were destroyed.

The tributes will continue Saturday at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, then aboard the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson at Pearl Harbour, culminating at the USS Arizona Memorial, one of the battle-ships sunk by the Japanese whose partly submerged hull can still be seen in the harbour.

Yeltsin tells students not to romanticise past

MOSCOW (R) — President Boris Yeltsin has told Russian schoolchildren to respect the past but not forget the atrocities committed by a former Communist regime.

"The history of our people and our country is our common heritage, let's treat it with care and respect," Mr. Yeltsin said in a televised address broadcast on Russian public television.

"At the same time let us not forget what the Communist Party did to Russia, how many officers, scientists, intellectuals and peasants have perished. There were millions of them," he said.

The speech marked Sept. 1, a state holiday in Russia, when schools and universities hold festivities to begin the new academic year.

The Russian Communist

Party, which blames Mr. Yeltsin for ruining the Soviet Union and abandoning communism, is likely to become a strong player in a parliamentary election in December.

"Today every citizen of our Russia can enjoy one of the basic rights of a free person, the right to choose his political convictions, ideological and cultural values," he said.

Mr. Yeltsin has said he hopes that liberal groupings, which back economic reform and political liberties in Russia, will not allow the Communists to dominate a new parliament.

Mr. Yeltsin, 64, grew from a regional Communist Party boss to a non-voting member of the ruling politburo in the mid-1980s, before

defecting to spearhead a liberal movement which ended in the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Parliamentary polls are widely seen as indicative for a presidential election due in June. Mr. Yeltsin has not yet announced whether he will stand again.

President Yeltsin Friday denounced violations of press freedom in Russia but urged journalists to exercise restraint in the run-up to parliamentary elections set for Dec. 17.

"There is a divergence between freedom of information on paper and the exercise of it in reality, and that divergence is increasing. That is the difficult situation the press is in now," Mr. Yeltsin told journalists and heads of the Russian

media at the opening of a congress of the democratic press in Moscow. He said administrative discrimination against journalists was "a common law crime."

"I ask the relevant authorities: why, despite the large number of such violations, was only one investigation launched in 1994 and three in 1995 for obstruction of the work of journalists?" Mr. Yeltsin asked.

He also accused prosecutors of ignoring certain "abuses of freedom of information."

Some journalists were violating the law banning "incitement to violence, to acts undermining the state's territorial integrity, or to social, ethnic or religious hatred," Mr. Yeltsin said.

Opinion & Analysis

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Guns that had to be silenced

THERE WAS a clear message to the Bosnian Serbs when some 300 NATO warplanes struck at their military bases and ammunition dumps around Sarajevo and their strongholds in Pale and elsewhere in the country. Ostensibly, the successive waves of aerial bombing against Serb positions came in response to the Serb mortar attack on a Sarajevo marketplace that killed 37 people Monday. In reality, however, the decision to launch an all-out assault on the Serb military positions came on the heels of repeated Serb disregard to other U.N. declared safe areas and their professed dependence on military might to impose a settlement for the Bosnian conflict. This is not to mention the Serbs' record of ethnic cleansing, mass murder and rape throughout the past three years or more.

The United Nations, NATO and the entire Western alliance were repeatedly disgraced by their apparent unwillingness to do something concrete in the past to put an end to the carnage of innocent people in the war-torn country. When all failed to put some sense into the Serbian leadership, the U.N. and NATO decided, albeit belatedly, to act. Had NATO acted sooner and in a firm manner against the Serbian aggression and war crimes, the latest killings would not have been necessary.

The massacre of 37 Bosnian civilians last week could have been avoided had NATO's air power been deployed sooner to drive a clear message to the defiant Serbs that enough was enough. Unfortunately, though, the performance of the U.N. and NATO during and before the time of the massacre had given credence to the belief by the Bosnian Serbs that there was no political will on the part of the international community to act against them. As Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic lamented in the wake of the latest exercise of raw power in his country against his archenemies, the world has finally done what it should have done a long time ago.

At long last there has been a real deterrent: NATO has targeted not only the Serbs' artillery posts around the Bosnian capital but also their radars, communication centres, ammunition depots and command posts throughout the country. The scope of NATO's action included Mostar in the west, Gorazde in the east and Tuzla in the north. This is indeed a sizeable military operation by any standards. But more important is the fact that it has been accompanied by an even bigger political campaign against the Serbs. Let us therefore hope that all guns in Bosnia would soon be silenced as they should have done a long time ago so that reason, common sense and peace could prevail.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER in Al Dustour commented on the recent series of explosions in Istanbul by expressing the view that Turkey is now facing a real danger of returning to violence and the subsequent intervention of the military in government affairs. Saleh Al Qallab said that the recent spate of explosions in Istanbul was directed not only at the government but also at the tourists who constitute a major source of income to the country. The Turkish armed forces carried out military coups in 1960, 1971 and 1980 in the aftermath of unrest and disturbances that rocked the country at the time, recalled the writer, who expressed belief that the army was bound to make similar moves should the political situation aggravate further.

A WRITER in Al Ra'i demanded that the commissioner general of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) rescind his order of closing the educational sciences college near Amman because such move is bound to adversely affect the Palestinian refugees living in Jordan. Ahmad Mischeh said that the decision to close the college under the pretext of financial constraints was in total contradiction with the agency's repeated announcement that it will not reduce its educational and health services to the refugees under any circumstances. There is no real justification for the closure of the college, especially as the agency's Commissioner Ilter Turkmen mentioned no such thing in his talks with Jordanian government officials last month, said the writer, who said that the agency has time and again reaffirmed that it will not take any action concerning the reduction of services without first consulting with the Jordanian government. As to the financial situation, said the writer, the agency realises that it only needs the sum of \$200,000 to cover the annual expenses of running the college, adding that such small amount can easily be raised through the agency's efforts to secure funds for its operations from the donor nations.

Jordanian Perspective

By Dr. Musa Keilani

Let us put the disturbing episode with Egypt behind

IT WAS not surprising to see Jordan coming under media attacks in Egypt last week over the Kingdom's approach to developments in Iraq. By and large, we all understand why the state-controlled Egyptian press went for belittling Jordan's principled positions and raising question marks over the Kingdom's motivations in giving sanctuary to former Iraqi minister Hussein Kamel and his brother along with their families.

Quite simply, Egypt felt its self-assumed role as "leader" of the Arab World was not being recognised when Jordan did not feel it necessary to consult Cairo over the defections. But that feeling did not start from the defections themselves but from Jordan's decision last year to sign a peace treaty with Israel, also without any prior consultations with Egypt. The pattern of Egyptian thinking was also clearly evident in the initial criticism that President Hosni Mubarak levelled against Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat for entering the Oslo accord with Israel before changing tones when Mr. Arafat sought to coordinate further peace moves with Egypt and consulted Cairo.

In fact, by hosting the signing in May 1994 of the agreement that launched Palestinian autonomy in Gaza and Jericho, Egypt was basking in the superficial political glory as a key player in the entire Middle East peace process. That also explained the very visible Egyptian anger over Mr. Arafat for his last-minute reservations that some key elements were missing from the accord. As far as the Egyptians were concerned, Mr. Arafat has no right whatsoever to cast a cloud over the carefully prepared Egyptian ceremony. Little thought was given to whether Mr. Arafat had a strong point behind his arguments. That has precisely been the problem with Egypt and its approaches to various issues.

Egypt has always wanted a dominant political role in the region much larger than its size and impose its hegemony. But it does not seem to have appreciated that things have undergone dramatic changes in the last five years, and the balance of power in the region no longer remains the same as it did before 1990.

Another factor behind the Egyptian media campaign against Jordan also appeared to be a desire to divert the attention of the Egyptian people from internal troubles besetting them by creating external problems. Perhaps it was only a coincidence that the Iraqi defection and the Jordanian approach to the issue offered the best target for Cairo's effort to deflect public attention from the mounting internal problems.

What we saw in President Mubarak's public offer of asylum to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, was a feeble attempt at grabbing world headlines, again falling very

much within the same pattern of behaviour. We don't think President Mubarak needed to be told by anyone that President Saddam is not of the mould that would seek asylum anywhere. As such, President Mubarak, by suggesting that Cairo was willing to offer asylum to the Iraqi president, was only trying to claw back into a position of political initiative, regardless, of course, of the reality that the initiative itself was a non-starter.

It was, however, rather strange that the campaign against Jordan started in the state-controlled Egyptian media one day after the Egyptian foreign minister, Amr Musa, visited Amman and held what he himself described as positive talks with the Jordanian leadership. We know the way things work in Egypt, and no one can convince us that such attacks came upon the initiative of the journalists themselves. The green signal was given from somewhere.

The barbed attack that Cairo's Al Jumhuriyah newspaper levelled against His Majesty the King by suggesting that he was harbouring a desire to bring Iraq back under Hashemite rule was at best totally unfounded. Indeed, the King himself was foreseeing such suggestions when he clearly spelt out in his address to the nation that he did not have any ambition in Iraq except to see an end to the suffering of the Iraqi people. We wonder whether Al Jumhuriyah bothered to include that part of the address in its coverage of the speech itself.

We also know how things work in Jordan. Strange as it may seem to the Egyptians -- and to some others for that matter -- the Jordanian media are not state-controlled. If Jordanian newspapers follow the official line it is only because they are convinced of the soundness of the line. In fact, quite often Jordanian officials suggest to the media here to tone down criticism of foreign countries or governments when such criticism does occur.

Again, it was not any government suggestion in Amman that prompted Jordanian newspapers to hit back at the Egyptian press. It was the indignant response of nationalist Jordanians who found ill-orientated attacks levelled against their country and leadership, and no one should have expected them to accept it for any reason whatsoever. We believe in what our leadership is doing and we are convinced of the wisdom and soundness of our policies.

In any event, we believe that the Egyptian criticism of Jordan was very unfortunate and should not have come in the first place. We are glad to see the Egyptian press toning down the criticism, coupled with indirect official assurances that Cairo does not want any strain in its ties with Amman. We in Jordan share the same sentiments and hope this disturbing episode is behind us now.

Ministry should reconsider higher education policies

By Elia Nasrallah

The Arabic dailies last week focused their attention on the question of acceptance of students in state-run universities, the repercussions of the defection of senior Iraqi officials to Jordan, domestic affairs and the Middle East question.

In discussing the controversy over the acceptance of limited numbers of school graduates at state universities, a writer in Al Dustour said that the government's decision to accept an additional number not exceeding 600 students can by no means solve the problem. He said twice the number of those accepted are facing a grim future since their parents cannot afford to send them abroad or pay the high fees charged by the private universities. Mohammad Daoud said that the solution is to have state universities adopting double shifts and also forcing the private universities to reduce their fees. He said this will help as many students as possible to acquire higher education.

Ahmad Mischeh, a writer in Al Ra'i, said that not only are students facing difficulty in securing seats for their higher education at state universities in Jordan but they also face the grim future of joining the army of the unemployed. The writer said that the Ministry of Higher Education has a duty to help find more university seats for school graduates eligible for obtaining higher education and the private universities have a duty to reduce their fees so as to open the door for more students to enrol. But, he said, the real problem lies with the university courses and subjects because they do not help the graduates to find jobs. The writer said that the courses should be re-shaped in a manner to cater to the needs of the local labour market.

George Haddad, a writer in Al Dustour, criticised the manner in which students are recruited for study at the state universities, charging that a quite a good number, of the fortunate ones enter

because they are supported by people in high places (wasta). Citing the example of a number of students who were accepted at these universities with below the 80 per cent grade level while others with 83 per cent grades were rejected, the writer said some of the students who are accepted through (wasta) to study at the state universities have rich parents who can afford to pay for their education at private colleges and foreign universities. The crisis that is created annually at the time of university registration in Jordan is caused by two factors: the intervention of people in high places (wasta) to secure seats for certain students and the failure on the part of the concerned authorities to come up with an appropriate educational system to ensure justice and equality.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

More than two thirds of students who passed the Tawjihi examinations this year are frustrated because they have failed to obtain seats at state universities to continue their higher education, said Fakhri Kawar, a writer in Al Dustour. Their frustration came as a result of failure on the part of the Council of Higher Education to find an appropriate solution to the crisis, which faces Jordan every year, said the writer. Citing the example of Egypt, where all those who pass the Tawjihi exams can enrol at the state universities the writer said Egypt's universities are far less in number than those in Jordan in percentage terms. A writer in Al Dustour said that civil servants attach great hope for improving their living standard on government decision to raise their salaries in the face of the sky rocketing prices. But the minute the government decides to give its employees a raise, merchants start thinking of ways to absorb it through raising the prices of their

goods, said Fakhri Kawar. What the employees get from the government is channelled in a different manner to the pockets of the greedy merchants and profiteers who are able to deceive the government and the limited-income groups alike and are quite skillful in ways of massing fortunes at the expense of the people, said the writer. It is incumbent on the government, he said, to take a firm stand against the merchants' greed to save itself the headache of giving raises to its employees except whenever that is necessary and halt the misery of the limited-income group.

Mohammad Subeithi, a writer in Al Dustour, criticised calls on the government to abolish the Ministry of Supply and stop subsidies for basic commodities. The ministry pays JD 30 million

retroactively the United States is opposed to such conclusion and is determined to perpetuate the sanctions. However, he said the Iraqi government's recent decision to open negotiations with Kuwait to find a solution to the problem of Kuwaiti prisoners in Iraq could help overcome the American opposition to the lifting of the sanctions especially if the Kuwaitis and the Iraqis reach a settlement. Sultan Al Hattab, a columnist in Al Ra'i, said that Jordan is calling for change in Iraq because it fears for the fate of its people who are starving and facing misery. Jordan calls for the change if it brings about an end to the sanctions that have brought about this misery but it is not urging one faction to take up arms against another or for violence to erupt in Iraq. What Jordan is seeking is an end to the embargo, as well as freedom and democracy for the Iraqi people and a better future for their children, said the writer. But he stressed that it is because Jordan cares for the Iraqi brothers that it is calling for the change, which the writer said would bring with it peace and prosperity to Iraq and the Arab Nation.

Mr. Hattab's views conflicted with those of Mahmoud Rimawi, another writer in Al Ra'i, who said that only the Iraqis have the right to take action that would either perpetuate the present situation or cause a change in the regime. The writer said that the Iraqis should have the freedom to voice their views and decide on the form of government they want because they are more aware of their needs than other people. Any change in Iraq must take into account the Iraqi people's interests first, said the writer, who expressed hope that the change would mark the advent of democratic life to the people.

'Twice bitten, thrice shy'

'The U.S. has abandoned the leadership role it should be playing as the sole superpower in the world'

By G. H. Jansen

"IT IS damned if it does and damned if it doesn't," that at present, seems to be the fate reserved for the U.S., the sole remaining world power.

Soon after the U.S. assumed that position, by default because of the collapse of the USSR, it was feared that Washington would be the "big bad wolf" or "tiger," freely roaming the international jungle. That has not happened, not as yet, and that failure has taken place so quietly that the world at large does not seem to have noticed that it is not led by a single world power.

One particular example of this development became apparent when George Stephanopoulos, the Green American special adviser to U.S. President Bill Clinton paid visits to Turkey, Cyprus and Greece in late August. His visit here turned out to be bitterly disappointing to the Greek Cypriots due, to some extent, to hopes based on Mr. Stephanopoulos's Greek ancestry. When, soon after Mr. Clinton's election, it was known that his college mate was going to be one of his right hand men. The Greek Cypriots seemed to believe that their struggle with Turkey, now forcibly occupying 38 per cent of the island, was all over bar the shouting: Washington would return occupied northern Cyprus to the Greek Cypriots on a silver salver.

At the end of his visit here, Mr. Stephanopoulos told a Greco-Turkish press conference that he, that is the U.S., had no plan to solve the Cyprus problem and that the two sides had to get together to work out a solution between themselves.

He was then condemned because the U.S. didn't take sides. Mr. Stephanopoulos's words of advice were identical to words of advice given by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher to the Arabs and, perhaps, to the Israelis, during his all-too-frequent missions to West Asia.

Thus, and as a matter of policy, it would seem that the U.S. has deliberately abdicated the leadership role that it should be exercising as the sole superpower. Why so? Not for lack of trying, but perhaps because of two conspicuous attempts at, and failures of, leadership -- and perhaps even lack of leadership -- in Somalia and now in Bosnia. So twice bitten, thrice shy.

There are several reasons for those particular failures and the present abdication. The most conspicuous was the weak, vacillating leadership given in foreign affairs by President Clinton and Secretary of State Christopher. Mr. Clinton personally is one of the causes of the failure of leadership. Because he was a draft-dodger not willing to serve in Vietnam, he cannot or will not impose his will, as commander-in-chief, on the U.S. military in those several situations where the U.S. has to play a military role abroad.

Then there is the widespread American fear of taking human casualties. No sooner are "the boys" put into the field than "bring the boys home" becomes a popular slogan. The great American public has not yet grasped the simple elementary fact that the role of a soldier is to kill and be killed. This humanitarian but weak-kneed impulse could be seen in operation in Beirut in 1983-84 and Mogadishu a decade later.

Other countries are reluctant to grant leadership to the U.S. when they see, in the crucially important West Asian area, that the U.S. is led by the minor state of Israel and carries out its behests even at the expense of its own consi-

derable national interests in the area which should lead the U.S. to be more friendly towards the Arabs.

Syria, for some time now, has been begging the U.S. to take an active part in its negotiations with Israel, which the U.S. helped to bring about, but the U.S. has consistently, and correctly, refused to do so. Correctly, because it has taken the Israeli side in the dispute. But, as a result, the talks between Israel and Syria are deadlocked.

Similarly it is correct for the U.S. not to participate in the Cyprus negotiations because here too it has taken sides with Turkey, covertly it would seem though this is known to be the fact.

The U.S. is at the centre of a dense world-wide net of interests so that it is unable to "take on" any major country which could do harm to this or that sector of America's network of interests. Thus, the U.S. will not "take on" Israel or Turkey, China or Japan, or India or Pakistan (maybe), or Indonesia or Germany, or Brazil or South Africa, or France over nuclear testing.

However, the U.S. record of leadership is not entirely negative: Last week it intervened in the case of Harry Wu, the human rights activist arrested in China he was released because of Washington's intervention. But that worked only because China, at this juncture, was prepared to pay a price for Mrs. Hillary Clinton's presence at the women's conference in Beijing. And also because China wants the continuation of the most favoured nation trading status granted by the U.S.

(This, of course, is how the U.S. exercises not leadership but influence -- by having something that other countries want, as for instance, influence with or grants from those two superagencies, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. But this is more blackmail than leadership because there is no direct exercise of power or even of persuasion.)

Another example of America's rare success in leadership was in Ireland where, thanks really to the influence of the Irish-American community, the Irish Republican Army was compelled to agree to a ceasefire.

But underlying the U.S. failure of leadership is a basic emotion. What the English poet Laureate Lord Tennyson called, "the craven fear of being great," because to be "great" and to be a leader one has to be out in front, on one's own, doing unpopular and even nasty things which the Americans, who want to be loved and who believe passionately in, "togetherness," do not like.

There is also a failure of the national nerve, due in a large degree to the humiliating defeat in Vietnam. It is inaccurate to say that the walk-over "victory" in the "war" against Iraq has cured the U.S. of the "Vietnam syndrome": for the second Gulf war was not a real war and the "Vietnam syndrome" is still alive in the U.S.

This American moral uncertainty about past actions resurface in mid-August with questions being raised about whether the U.S. should apologise to Japan for dropping the two atom bombs there, even though, as is widely known, the Japanese were brutal aggressors.

Honest doubt and self-questioning about one's past actions are good things but not when, as in the case of the U.S., they lead to weak will uncertainty and indecisively.

But if, unfortunately, there can only be one superpower, it is really such a bad thing that that power should be a confused and uncertain giant?

Northern Ireland peace is Washington party talk

By Andrew Hill
Reuters

DUBLIN — It was a muggy night in Washington when Ireland came together after seven decades of partition, 25 years of war, 3,200 deaths and one of the biggest peace time security operations since World War II.

Sweat flowed as easily as the wine and Guinness beer at a party in the Irish ambassador's residence. The guests eyed the small swimming pool in the garden with a barely concealed thirst to swim.

Such events are common in the U.S. power capital.

But this was a remarkable evening. The guests represented every shade of political opinion in modern Ireland and they were talking to each other, something they never do at home.

It was the political dividend of 10 months of peace in Northern Ireland brought about by twin guerrilla ceasefires and an unprecedented international attempt to heal one of Europe's deepest scars through concerted diplomacy.

No deals were clinched. No grand plan was unveiled to bring about the new "agreed Ireland", sought by Britain and Ireland, in

which Protestant and Catholic, Irish nationalist and pro-British unionist, could live together in prosperous peace.

But it symbolised a willingness to talk, even if only above the clinking of glasses and the drive of an Irish reel band, brought about by the ceasefire of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), which will be one year old next week.

That hot night, whether on the streets of Belfast recently cleared of British army troops or in the corridors of power in draughty Dublin, the talk, as in Washington, was of peace.

"It wasn't the fact that

they all gathered under one roof," recalled one senior Irish official who was present. "It was the fact that they were all standing there and talking together."

The occasion was a conference called by President Bill Clinton to draw investment into Northern Ireland and the border counties to cement the rare peace caused by the silencing of IRA and Protestant "loyalist" guns.

It was the who's who of Irish politics, a layman's guide to a conflict that has eluded many attempts at resolution but which the key peace-makers, Britain, Ireland and the United

States, say now faces its best-ever chance of settlement.

There were Northern Irish Unionists, the diehard Protestant bastions of continued British rule of the province. There were Irish Republicans who dream of ending the seven-decade old partition of the island.

There were Irish government ministers such as Deputy Premier Dick Spring, one of the authors of the Anglo-Irish Downing Street declaration which launched the peace drive in December 1993 and persuaded the gunmen to stop the killing.

There were even political representatives of the mur-

kiest corners of the conflict, the Protestant gunmen who killed 900 Catholics in cold blood to terrorise the community from which the Irish Republican Army guerrillas draw support.

Sinn Fein, the IRA's political arm, sent its regrets. Its president, Gerry Adams, was hosting another function across town at which he was airing his views on how to move the peace towards his goal of ending British rule of the province.

But he had made his mark in Washington. Hours before he held a brief meeting with Britain's Northern Ireland Secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew, an event unthinkable only months previously when London vilified Mr. Adams.

It was a moment rich in symbolism. Britain had insisted there could be no such meeting until the IRA started handing over the guns and bombs it used against British rule. But the London government changed its mind.

Northern Ireland's mainstream Unionist leadership collectively boycotted the Washington conference as a result, but sent delegates

nonetheless. They were there on that muggy night in Washington, even though they never come to Dublin.

So was David Ervine, head of the Progressive Unionist Party, which represents the views of the Ulster Volunteer Force, one of the two main Loyalist guerrilla groups — so-called because they are "loyal" to British rule.

His pup has no seats in the London parliament — yet. But Mr. Ervine says it represents the voice of Protestants weary of war and of a leadership still in place from decades ago whose war cry was and is "Ulster says no" — to anything but British rule.

"Where did it get us all?" asks Mr. Ervine. "The Unionist leadership has been saying 'no' for years and all we've had is years of conflict."

It still says 'no'. It says no to attending an Irish forum for national peace and reconciliation which meets weekly in Dublin to test the views of every section of Irish society from farmers to Sinn Fein and the opposition Irish Fianna Fail party.

It says 'no' to attending

all-party talks to be convened by Britain and Ireland until the IRA and Loyalists disarm. It fears a sellout to Irish nationalism under the guise of peace.

But there is a feeling among British and Irish officials as well as those at the Washington party that Unionists will have to talk, if only to safeguard the British status they cherish.

The point of reference is a new blueprint, called the framework document, which Britain and Ireland launched in February to build on the peace and get the two neighbours to cooperate on the economic front to cement trust and peace.

It is still on the table, awaiting a forum in which it can be discussed.

Its fourth paragraph, which might have been hung over the door of the Irish embassy that night, said: "A climate of peace enables the process of healing to begin."

"Everyone now has a role to play in moving irreversibly beyond the failures of the past and creating new relationships capable of perpetuating peace with freedom and justice."

Rwandan Hutu hardliners feel no guilt for genocide

By Manohar Esipisu
Reuters

KASHUSHA CAMP, Zaire — The men of Kashusha camp say they oppose further ethnic bloodletting in their Rwandan homeland but they will not apologise for the slaughter of up to one million minority Tutsis and moderate Hutus last year.

Kashusha and the twin camp host about 100,000 ethnic Hutus, or one tenth of the Hutu refugees who fled to Zaire after the genocide and civil war.

But the camps host a special class of refugee. Many are from the Interahamwe militia that is blamed for the massacres or are former civil servants who fled when the Tutsi-dominated Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) won the war in July, 1994.

They know they will be key targets for reprisals if they go home, but they do not accept blame for what happened.

"Are we remorseful over so much blood lost, should we apologise? I do not think so. It was a war and in a war it is not one party that is guilty," said a university-trained agronomist in Kashusha called Ngendahana.

"Most refugees do not know who was involved in the massacres. It is impossible for everyone to have been involved," said Asman Gakusi, once a hotelier but now championing the cause of an organisation called Orerwa au Rwanda (Return to Rwanda).

The group denies that

A Zairean soldier keeps guard over Hutu refugees who were forced to evacuate the refugee camps and return to Rwanda (AFP photo)



former government leaders or the Interahamwe militia are threatening and intimidating ordinary refugees to ensure that efforts at repatriation fail.

"Who is the killer? Inside the RPF aren't there people who have also killed and are walking around Kigali free?" asks a photocopied leaflet circulating in Kashusha.

"We do not want war in our country. We want peace. We have no regrets

or feeling of guilt over what happened, we were in a war situation then."

"We can only be guaranteed security and peace if the current leaders in Kigali talk to us so we can discuss how to govern our country together," the notice added.

Zaire has suspended the forced expulsion of Hutu refugees it began one week ago. The U.N. refugee agency UNHCR is ready to take over a voluntary repatriation and claims many ordinary refugees are willing.

But only about 200 of the one million refugees took up the offer on Friday, with many refugees backing their leaders' view that the Tutsi-dominated army in Rwanda will wreak merciless revenge on returnees.

Foreign aid workers say the Interahamwe in Kashusha and Inera formed defence units last week to resist Zairean troops if they

tried to force them to leave exile.

Around 100,000 of the young men in camps dotting the shores of Lake Kivu in eastern Zaire fled to the hills when Zaire began its forceful repatriation on Aug. 19. Some 60,000 of these have since returned to their camps.

The Zaireans drove about 15,000 refugees back to Rwanda before suspending the operation. The UNHCR claims the returnees have been treated well and there is a pro-return momentum.

In Kashusha, the view is very different. A man who declined to be identified spoke of returnees being divided into groups of men, women and children at the border. He said the men were sentenced to prison or death despite nothing proving guilt or innocence.

Clouds of dust hang over Kashusha, a squalid and smelly place. But residents feel safe and have built a home away from home.

Senior civil servants in the former government still have their cars and trucks.

Kashusha has everything from European videotapes to watches and electronic gadgets, offered for sale to visitors with dollars.

One of the refugees is Chinese. The woman declined to give her name but said she had trekked into exile with her Hutu husband, whom she married when he was studying in Beijing.

"I saw some of the killings, I saw the fighting. But it is not my country and I cannot justifiably say who was guilty and who was innocent."

Jordan, Israel discuss strategy

(Continued from page 1)

Israel, which signed a peace treaty in October and are now seeking close economic cooperation and coordination in developing some of the border areas, including the Jordan Rift Valley.

The meeting was attended by Omayya Touqan, a senior member of a Jordanian committee preparing for the MENA summit. Jordanian ambassador to Israel Marwan Muasher, Israeli Ambassador to Jordan Shimon Shamir, Minister Plenipotentiary at the Israeli embassy Yacov Rosen and Prime Ministry advisor Masam Awadallah as well as other officials.

"We discussed all issues of regional economic cooperation and matters related to the Amman economic summit," Dr. Khalaf told reporters after the two-and-a-half-hour meeting, held over lunch at the Guest Palace in Amman.

"The three most important topics we discussed were regional projects, particularly projects that we will submit to the Amman summit. We also discussed the Amman summit and we discussed issues of interest to the region in the post-peace era."

"We have decided to give priorities to fast-track projects that the region needs and which could be implemented relatively speedily," said Dr. Khalaf, adding that both sides agreed to coordinate work on preparing for joint projects.

The minister said that among the priority projects — some of which are expected to be implemented in 1996 — were access roads and bridges across the River Jordan to connect Jordan

with the Palestinian territories as well as Israel. There are two bridges connecting Jordan with the West Bank and another linking the Jewish state with the Kingdom.

In addition, a desert crossing point — Araba — is also operational near Aqaba. However, the bridge and the southern crossing are not seen as adequate to accommodate the large volume of Israelis visiting Jordan every day and an expected high volume of cargo traffic between the two sides after they sign agreements on transport and trade.

Mr. Beilin said some projects were shortlisted for quick implementation, but he declined to discuss details. "The meeting was too short to review the costs involved," he told reporters at the Guest Palace.

However, he said the talks covered the expansion of Aqaba airport to serve both countries, development of the Jordan Rift Valley and a \$3 billion plan to build a canal to link the Red Sea with the Dead Sea.

"What is more important," said Mr. Beilin, "we — Jordanians, Palestinians and Israelis — will be able to plan together for the future, because we live here together and it will be a mistake for us to plan separately for the common future for all of us."

"We have found a common denominator," he said of his discussions with Dr. Khalaf. "The common denominator is very wide."

Jordan and Israel as well as the Palestinians have prepared a list of projects worth several billion dollars to be presented at the

Amman summit, expected to be attended by more than 1,500 government leaders, international businessmen and economic experts. All sides would be seeking financing for the projects, some of them to be shared by Jordan and Israel as well as the Palestinians.

As such, said Alon Liel, secretary-general of the Israeli ministry of economy and planning, Mr. Beilin and Dr. Khalaf agreed to hold a meeting with Palestinian Planning Minister Nabil Shaath in Bonn in October. "The idea is to create a Jordanian-Israeli-

Palestinian triangle for economic cooperation," Liel told the Jordan Times.

"We have developed a framework not only to go on and discuss projects, but also to discuss the roots — the economies of the three countries, the infrastructure, services, etc.," Mr. Liel said. "It was a very

productive meeting."

"The two countries never sat down and planned" economic cooperation, said Mr. Liel. "We have attended many international forums but we never had a meeting between the two planning ministers."

In his comments to the press, Mr. Beilin also touched on Israel's negotiations with Syria and criticised Damascus for not accepting Israeli calls for behind-the-scenes contacts to advance the peace process.

"I'm much less optimistic about the Syrian track" compared with the Palestinian track, he said. "I believe that Israel went a very long way suggesting that our withdrawal (from Syria's Golan Heights) will be parallel to the extent of peace suggested by the Syria. Regrettably, until this moment there is no decision from the Syrian side."

"It is very difficult to tell," he said in response to

a question when he expected Israel to make peace with Syria. "I would like to understand the Syrian position. As you know we have no other channels to the Syrians. We don't have political relations with the Syrians. There is no channel of communications between us and the Syrians, which makes our life more difficult."

Mr. Beilin agreed that the concept of regional cooperation would make better sense if Syria and Lebanon were to join the multilateral phase of the peace process. Both countries are staying away from that phase saying such discussions could wait until progress is made in the bilateral negotiations.

"I suggest that they decide to join us," said Mr. Beilin. "It is their decision. We would like them to join us. If they decide to join, like many other Arab countries, it will be to the benefit of all of us."

Strikes on Serbs suspended

(Continued from page 1)

bian President Slobodan Milosevic. The two met again Friday.

The airstrikes — the largest in NATO history — seemed to be having the intended effect of limiting the Serbs' ability to wage war.

Captain Trevor Murray, chief of air operations at NATO's southern headquarters in Naples, said the alliance had flown 500 missions by Friday, and there were no new reports of anti-aircraft fire.

Reflecting growing optimism among U.N. officials, spokesman Chris Vernon said: "We have completely suppressed in our opinion the ability of the Bosnian Serb heavy weapons to fire back into Sarajevo."

German warplanes were in

action Friday over Bosnia, marking the first German combat action since World War II.

Bonn gave only the barest information about the mission, which was in support of the rapid reaction force in Bosnia-Herzegovina rather than part of the NATO air raids.

The German Tornados "returned safely to the air base at Piacenza" in Italy, the German defence ministry said.

The announcement did not say exactly when the German Luftwaffe jets were in action, but other sources said it was on Friday.

By coincidence, Friday was the 50th anniversary of the beginning of World War II in Europe, when Adolf Hitler's

troops, tanks and planes invaded Poland on Sept. 1, 1939. The anniversary was marked quietly in some military cemeteries and churches in Germany.

The German planes were in the air also on Thursday but they were not called on because of "technical reasons" that the defence ministry did not explain further.

U.N. military sources in Sarajevo and Zagreb said Friday's targets included: A T-64 tank and an artillery piece near the southwestern city of Mostar, an anti-aircraft missile site near Sokolac in eastern Bosnia, a radar bunker near the eastern town of Foca, an ammunition dump southwest of the government enclave of Gorazde, and a road bridge at Miljeno, 10 kilometres southeast of Gorazde.

SIMPLY



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Economy

Bahrain reports growth, lower deficit

MANAMA (AFP) — A rise in crude prices in the first half of 1995 boosted Bahrain's economy and slashed the budget deficit by more than 40 per cent, its finance and economy minister said Wednesday.

Ibrahim Abdul Karim said the gross domestic product (GDP) was expected to rise by 2.5 per cent in 1995 to 1.88 billion Bahraini dinars (\$4.88 billion) while the value added in the oil sector would surge by 11.5 per cent and that in the non-oil sector by around one per cent.

"Oil and non-oil exports have increased this year while there was a rise in applications for trade and industrial licences," he told Al-Khabeer daily.

"The results recorded during the period covering January and June 1995 are encouraging, especially in view of the difficult business environment being experienced throughout the region," he added.

Bahrain produces around 40,000 barrels per day of crude oil, most of which are refined and exported. Other exports include aluminium from the government-controlled Alba company, the biggest smelter in the Middle East.

Mr. Abdul Karim said the actual budget deficit was reduced to 28.7 million dinars (\$74.6 million) in the first half of 1995, from 45.7 million dinars (\$126.6 million) in the same period of 1994.

An increase in exports and unchanged import value also created a trade surplus of 64.8 million dinars (\$168.4 million) in the first half of 1995, when exports totalled 723 million dinars (\$1.92 billion).

The oil price rise in the first half also boosted Bahrain's crude earnings by 29 million dinars (\$75.4 million), the minister said without giving figures on the total income.

The projected growth in 1995 is lower than the 3.2 per cent GDP increase recorded in 1994, when Bahrain sharply boosted aluminium exports.

Unlike the major Gulf oil producers, Bahrain relies more on income from non-crude exports and the non-oil sector accounts for the bulk of its GDP.

Iraq gives traders deadline to clear banned goods

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq will soon mobilise the army, police and members of the ruling Baath Party for a crackdown on smuggling and traders dealing in banned goods.

The Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), in a decree signed by President Saddam Hussein and published in Baghdad newspapers Friday, issued new directives to check the smuggling into neighbouring countries and to clear shop shelves of goods banned in Iraq.

"The ministries of defence and interior, the General Directorate of Security, the General Commission of Customs and (Baath) Party organisations are authorised to seize property bound for smuggling and property banned from circulation in the local market," said the RCC, the highest executive and legislative body in Iraq.

It is the second time in three years Iraq has attempted a crackdown on smugglers and traders dealing in banned items.

The list of banned foreign goods ranges from toys, computers, beer and spirits to chicken and baking powder.

It also includes foreign confectionery, apples, bananas, whisky, cigarettes, perfumes, videos, watches, cheese, vacuum cleaners, washers, clothes, shoes, radios and cassette recorders.

Iraqi traders were only allowed to deal in two kinds of imported goods — basic foods which are exempt from customs duties, and a heavily-taxed special list of permitted spare parts and agricultural tools.

But as time passed, the authorities relaxed controls and a variety of foreign goods emerged in local market again.

Shops in smart areas in Baghdad are now loaded with foreign sweets, canned foods and beverages — real luxuries for many hard-hit Iraqis, reeling under crippling U.N. trade sanctions imposed for Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Imports of clothes and shoes are openly displayed in shops in several areas in Baghdad.

Commented one trader in the city's Karrada district: "within 30 days most shelves in my shop will be empty. About 50 per cent of what you see falls within the category of banned items."

The sinking dinar, which now trades at about 2,000 to one U.S. dollar, has made Iraq a haven for smugglers.

Under the new decree, to take effect in a month, a

committee will be formed in each province in Iraq to receive items that will be confiscated and hand them over to ministries. The RCC also offered rewards to informers.

Imported goods are expensive and beyond the reach of most Iraqis but the trader in Karrada said many in his neighbourhood had the ability to pay.

A pack of foreign cigarettes in Karrada was selling on Friday for about 600 dinars and a kilogramme of Jordanian spaghetti for 400.

Most imports enter Iraq from either Jordan or Turkey through the Kurdish rebel-held territory.

"For me it is the end of business. I will have to seek another source of income," said a shop owner.

At Sahata Al Tahrir in the heart of Baghdad thousands of people, many of them petty traders, crammed an open square, selling mostly household belongings.

Abdul Hussein Abbas, squatting under the shade of a high rise, had a radio, glasses, spoons and blankets for sale.

"Who cares about honey, sweets, whisky or Pepsi Cola. We need flour, rice and sugar," he said.

Lend to poor, not rich, says banker

HUAIROU, China (R) — The world's banks should alter their lending policies radically to lend to the poor and not to the rich, the founder and director of the world's biggest bank for the poor said Friday.

The Grameen Bank of Bangladesh will make loans of \$500 million this year, averaging \$140 each, to its two million clients in 35,000 villages, 94 per cent of whom are women. Mohammad Yunus said.

He spoke at the credit corner of the non-governmental organisations Forum for Women, which opened Thursday in this suburb of Beijing, after attending a seminar on women and economic empowerment: Banking on the Poor.

The forum runs in parallel and hopes to influence the fourth U.N. Conference on Women, which opens Monday and has economic improvement of women as a major theme.

The Grameen Bank, established in 1983, has become a world model for alternative banking and was widely cited at the seminar by those who have established similar banks and credit institutions outside the financial mainstream.

The bank targets the very poor, with starting loans as low as \$12-15 for items such as a sewing machine, materials to make baskets or to buy ducks or goats.

"Our repayment rate is 98 per cent, against a recovery rate of 80 per cent for commercial loans, less than 25 per cent for farm loans and less than 30 per cent for housing loans in Bangladesh," said Mr. Yunus.

"This is because the poorest are very active, agile and work harder than the rich," he said. "It is a question of survival."

South Korean foreign debt hits record \$70b

SEOUL (AFP) — South Korea's gross foreign debt was a record \$70.2 billion at the end of June due mainly to a ballooning current account deficit, the Bank of Korea said Friday.

Net foreign debt — total foreign debt minus overseas assets — stood at \$17.3 billion as of June, up 68 per cent or \$7.02 billion from the end of last year.

Bank officials said an aggravated current account deficit, and the extended payment period for imports on a deferred payment basis were responsible for the sharp rise in debt this year.

A surge of overseas loans by corporations to finance their facility expansion in tandem with the economic recovery was also blamed for swelling the debt, they said.

Overseas assets expanded by \$6.33 billion in the

January-to-June period to \$52.9 billion as of June, the central bank said.

Short-term foreign loans repayable within a year increased by \$9.24 billion from the end of last year to \$39.63 billion at the end of June, while long-term loans rose by \$4.11 billion to \$30.56 billion.

South Korea saw its total foreign debt fall between 1985 and 1989 to \$29.37 billion, thanks to current account surpluses during the period.

But since then total foreign debt has steadily worsened to \$42.81 billion in 1992 and \$43.87 billion in 1993.

The central bank, however, said the nation's debt would shrink, given that the current account deficit and domestic firms' foreign loans are expected to decline in tandem with South Korea's economic slowdown.

Russia plans to streamline tax system

MOSCOW (AFP) — The Russian government plans to streamline the country's tax system from Jan. 1 by removing a dozen company taxes and limiting various regional taxes to ease the burden on investors.

Deputy Finance Minister Sergei Shatalov told reporters the taxes to be lifted included the "special" tax for supporting farmers, which forms 1.5 per cent of value added tax.

In the first six months of this year police listed more than 12,000 new enterprises which were set up illegally without being registered with the tax authorities, compared with 8,000 for the whole of 1994.

Mr. Shatalov described the current tax system as "vague, unstable and unpredictable," saying it put off investors and encouraged tax fraud, which has reached astronomical proportions, and could deprive the 1995 budget of 40 per cent of planned revenue.

The new tax code also restricts local authorities from imposing various regional taxes.

Since 1994 Moscow has allowed regions the right to impose their own taxes.

"About 100 new taxes, appeared, some of which are bizarre such as that imposed on cattle for passing through a village or the tax intended to fund a regional football team," Mr. Shatalov said.

He said the tax reforms would only affect companies.

At the current rate, individuals earning less than 10 million rubles (\$2,300) annually are liable to pay up to 12 per cent income tax, while those earning between 10 and 50 million are liable for 20 per cent and those earning more than 50 million are liable for 30 per cent.

Persian carpet exports fall sharply

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian carpet exports, the country's main source of hard currency after oil, have dropped sharply amid tough new government regulations on exports and currency exchange.

The customs department says \$400 million of carpets were exported during the first four months of the current Iranian year, down from \$600 million for the same period last year.

Total sales last year reached \$1.8 billion.

But many experts believe sales are even lower, with carpet exporters claiming the trade has all but stopped because of measures introduced by the government in May and imposed almost overnight.

The new regulations require carpet exporters to repatriate all their earnings within six months and exchange their earnings at the state bank at the maximum official rate of 3,000 riyals to the dollar, 25 per cent lower than the black market prices for the greenback.

"Even if all goes well, from transportation costs to

marketing, exporters will lose an average of 20 per cent," Assadollah Fazeli, a major carpet dealer, told AFP. "No one wants to export carpets under such circumstances. We have no choice but to wait and see what happens."

Dozens of merchants participating in a carpet fair in Tehran this week echoed his words.

"This is a turning-point for our carpet exports," said one participant, Ali Akbar Tavakoli. "We have worked for years to become number one in the world only to lose it to carpet exporters from other countries like China, India and Turkey."

Participants complained they had not even sold half as much as they did in last year's fair, organised annually by the government.

"People just become here to look. There were hardly any exporters coming to visit," Mr. Tavakoli said.

Under pressure from merchants, the government agreed last month to allow traders to keep 30 per cent of their money abroad.

But the measure failed to satisfy exporters, who say

carpets are over-valued and demand further cuts in rates.

"This is a political issue, not an economic one," said another carpet merchant, Hamidreza Dilmaghani. "The government doesn't want to listen to us."

But an official of the state-owned Iran carpet company accused merchants of exaggerating, saying the price of Iranian carpets had "fallen sharply in the world market in recent years and the government had to intervene at some point."

THE BETTER HALF

By Glasbergen

"It's only lunch with a male co-worker! And besides, the surveillance camera doesn't go with my outfit!"

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

NOTIX
FUSE
REPIME
REVORF

Answer here: _____

Yesterday's Jumbles: SUEDE LEAVE ENOUGH CANDID
Answer: This can make a writer happy — A NOVEL IDEA

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1995

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Wright Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You know how to improve existing conditions at your home and get excellent results. Stay within your budget this evening or you will be short of money later on.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Add to important routines early in the day and accomplish a great deal. Show more understanding towards associates or there could be great problems.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Find out what your true financial status is this morning and do whatever is necessary to bring more abundance. Perseverance pays off. Enjoy the company of a close friend this evening.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Get an early start on important business matters so that you'll have time for recreation later. Pay vital bills that may have come up.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Study personal aspects of your life and figure out the proper way to improve them this morning. Strive for increase happiness in your personal life.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Gain the cooperation of good friends for a personal interest you have in mind this morning. Obtain data you need from the right source for a current project.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Look to a higher up for support you need today in order to further your career. Take no risk where your personal health is concerned at this time.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Figure out a practical way that could give you added income in the future. Follow the advice of a financial expert and you will have more success.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Be sure to keep promises made during this week. Sidelapse one who has an eye on your assets or you will be left with a hole in your pocket.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) An associate who is upset may try to pressure you into something that is not to your liking this morning. Put your foot down and resist or trouble follows.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Attend to important duties early and show your efficiency in handling them. Show your increased loyalty to the one you love and benefits will abound.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Investigating a new outlet now could be profitable to you in the future. Contact higher ups and gain everything you need for that special project.

Birthstone of September: Sapphire — Lapis Lazuli

THE Daily Crossword by Virginia B. Hopewell

ACROSS

1 — row (derelict's area)
5 College gp.
9 — Broz (Tito)
14 Commotion
15 Puerto —
16 Palate pendant
17 Elvis — Presley
18 Make as wages
19 No way!
20 Volunteer State
22 Obliterate
23 Shiny fabric
24 Peruse
26 "The — Not Taken" (Frost)
29 Terrapin
33 — Lama
37 Irritate
38 Nautical word
40 Accustom
41 Thousand dollars
42 Took an oath
43 Street group
44 Roman garment
45 "The Lady —"
46 Pilots
48 "This one's —"
50 Requisite
52 Unfavorable
57 Stage presentations
60 Certain scientist
63 Eagle's nest
64 Give the eye
65 Exchange premium
66 Ulysses S. —
67 Nail for a plummet
68 Criticizes
69 Magnani and Mollo
70 Japanese wrestling
71 Gen. Robert —

DOWN

1 Data, for short
2 Asian peninsula
3 — care one straw (Terence)
4 "No man is an island" poet
5 CA city
6 Inlets

7 Farm division
8 Copier need
9 AK city
10 Bank bad news word
11 Capital of Fiji
12 Dots of land; Fr.
13 Whittle away
21 Mysterious
25 Montmartre season
27 Jason's craft
28 Artist Rivera
30 Author Heyerdahl
31 Knowledge handed down
32 Inspected
33 Lodgings
34 Med. subj.
35 "Clair de —"
36 "Don't cry for me, —"
38 Spare
42 Strainer
44 Famous poet's initials
47 Adjusts a clock

49 Manage to get along
51 Trivial matter
53 Day's march
54 August
55 Net
56 Unevenly notched

57 Heroic tale
58 Jerome of music
59 Persian Gulf land
61 USSR secret police
62 Seafood item

Peanuts

Andy Capp

Mutt'n'Jeff

Business & Finance

American expert highlights need for advanced technological telecommunications in Jordan

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Hi-tech communication services are an essential component in any country's effort to invite foreign investments and the country should also be attuned to adopting the fast-developing technologies in communications since most investors are used to advanced services, an American expert has affirmed.

Craig Blakely, an attorney at law specialised in representing telecommunication companies in the U.S. and elsewhere, also said governments should remove all restrictions on on-line information services since, in the long run, the flow of information would benefit businesses and thus contribute to economic growth.

One of the most important factors in influencing investment decisions and the flow of foreign capital is the availability of advanced telecommunication services, particularly so for American companies which have grown increasingly dependent on hi-tech facilities for their daily business, he said.

As far as Jordan is concerned, the Kingdom's expectations of foreign investments and efforts to invite capital should be coupled with quick moves to adapt its own telecommunication services to meet international demands along with other expected changes in economic laws and the investment climate in the country, he said.

The expert's comments come at a time when Jordan is preparing for the Middle East and North Africa economic summit scheduled to be held in October. The summit is expected to attract over

1,500 government leaders, international businessmen and economic experts, many of them who would be looking closely at the pros and cons of investments in Jordan, among them the availability of advanced telecommunication services.

Mr. Blakely, who plans to attend the summit, was speaking at an informal meeting during a visit he paid to Jordan last week for "familiarising" himself with the situation in the Kingdom, the laws in effect and the status of telecommunications here. He also visited the Palestinian territories on a similar mission.

The advanced level of telecommunication services in the U.S., Mr. Blakely said, was a direct result of free competition. When companies vie for better shares of the market it is only natural that they continuously pursue advanced technologies and offer better services to customers, he noted.

In the context of Jordan, Mr. Blakely said, he was informed of the Telecommunications Corporation's (TCC) to "commercialise" its operations ahead of privatisation and open the door for competition. However, he said, competition between a state-owned entity and a private sector firm will not be healthy and fair.

Such competition is expected here during an interim period after the TCC commercialises its operations and moves towards privatisation. A clear shape has not yet been given to the final shape of the entity, but the government is expected to retain

controlling interest in it.

If that indeed is the case, Mr. Blakely said, there is an obvious contradiction in the very concept of free competition since the state-owned firm would have an unfair edge over all competitors by virtue of its links with the government.

Throughout his 15 years of experience in representing telecommunication companies, the "biggest obstacle" to free competition is "resistance to change," said Mr. Blakely. When the government is comfortable with existing arrangements and system, then it resists changes because of the uncertainty over what those changes would herald.

Another impeding factor is a sense of "loss of control" over the flow of information as well as of loss of revenues.

On the first count, it is far better for governments to allow the free flow of information by "recognising the importance of information," Mr. Blakely said, adding that businesses were the ultimate beneficiary from up-to-date information. This in turn means increased economic activities that benefit the national economy.

Similarly, governments should also accept short-term losses in revenues as a result of freeing the telecommunication sector for competition among private sector firms under token regulatory laws aimed at protecting the interest of the public.

Share prices drop at AFM but impact on index not heavy

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Fears of major slide in prices at the Amman stock exchange as a result of a strain ties with Iraq, Jordan's main trading partners, proved unfounded, but the market did take a beating last week, with medium-sized firms losing up to three per cent in share prices, brokers said.

The official Amman Financial Market (AFM) index showed a less than one per cent decline in prices, but the brokers said the losses could not be reflected in the index since most of the companies whose shares slipped were not among the 60 major firms which form the basis for the main market indicator.

Turnover for the week remained largely unchanged at

3.9 million dinars compared with the previous week's 3.8 million dinars. The weekly AFM report said 1.9 million shares changed hands under 3,057 contracts during the trading week ending Thursday.

The official AFM index closed at 155 points, reflecting an insignificant 0.1 point or 0.1 per cent decline during the week. But, as brokers pointed out, the basis for the index are 60 blue chips, which held largely steady during the week.

"The actual slip in prices would be between two and three per cent when you consider the value of stocks of companies not included in the index," said a broker, who like other AFM dealers, cannot be identified under market guidelines.

Separate sectoral indices showed that services stock

slipped by 1.8 per cent, industrials by 1.2 per cent, insurance shares by 1.6 per cent and commercial banks by 0.7 per cent.

Commercial banks and financial institutions accounted for 36 per cent of the weekly turnover with 1.42 million dinars, followed by industrials with 1.4 million dinars, the services sector with 750,000 dinars and insurance firms with 320,000 dinars.

The AFM report said stock of 86 companies from among the 120 listed in the market were involved in this week's trading. As business closed for the week, 11 of them had gained, 66 had slipped and nine remained unchanged.

"The market is still very much uncertain over trade relations with Iraq, and a wait-and-see approach adopted by most speculators

was largely behind the relatively low losses this week," said a dealer. "Expectations were that the market would have seen a major slide, but the pointed comments by the King that he would not close Jordan's borders with Iraq or suspend economic and trade links with Iraq appeared to have helped a lot in checking the slide."

Iraq brought about 250 million dinars worth of Jordanian products last year, accounting for nearly 40 per cent of the Kingdom's exports excluding phosphates and potash. Hundreds of companies depend solely on the Iraqi market.

According to Amman Chamber of Industry figures, Jordanian exports to Iraq between Jan. 1 and Aug. 22 this year totalled 260 million dinars.

Companies see gain by putting profits back in Saudi Arabia

DUBAI (R) — ATT is pumping \$300-\$400 million from a \$4.1 billion telephone contract in Saudi Arabia back into the kingdom, and likes what it is getting from its investment.

"To us it makes good business sense" to help develop a telecommunications industry to meet Saudi domestic needs, said Bob Wyatt of

ATT Corp, the American telecommunications giant.

ATT is the first firm to turn around some of its revenues from an ordinary commercial deal in the Middle East kingdom to help build up the technological, industrial and commercial base that Saudi Arabia sees as vital to its future when the oil wells start to run dry.

The "you rub my back and I'll rub yours" deals whereby companies that win big contracts in Saudi Arabia agree to plough some of the profits back into the kingdom are called offset projects.

Such projects have been a requirement for about a decade for Saudi Arabia's immense military contracts — worth some \$30 billion from now to the end of the century — but they are only now coming into play in the commercial sphere.

"It is my understanding that there is a plan to eventually require offset for all government procurement," said a senior Western executive in Riyadh.

Encouraged by the kingdom's improving finances and economic reforms, decade-old proposals to

offset Riyadh's tens of billion of dollars worth of arms deals mainly with Britain, the United States and France are being revived as part of plans to set up aerospace, telecommunication and other high-tech industries.

Companies on the commercial side also see green fields.

"We are quite pleased with experience in the field of offset... in our area of interest, the Saudi market can absorb what we have in mind with potential to export to the region," said ATT's Wyatt, whose firm won in July another \$500 million deal for a 300,000-subscriber mobile phone system in the kingdom.

ATT formed a 50-50 joint venture company recently with Riyadh-based software firm International Systems Engineering. The new firm is expected to be awarded sub-contracts worth \$170 million to develop specialised software for the ATT expansion.

Saudi Arabia, expecting a deficit-free 1995 after years of huge shortfalls due to weak oil prices, said in its 1995-2000 development plan released in July that it would

expand the offset programme to include large non-military projects.

During the plan years, Riyadh is due to conclude many major deals for multi-million-dollar power plants, infrastructure work and a \$7 billion contract to buy 61 commercial aircraft from Boeing Co. and McDonnell Douglas Corp.

Details have not been announced, but experts say firms may be obliged to reinvest 35 per cent of the value of the imported component of a civilian project for deals above 100 million riyals (\$26.6 million).

The five-year plan places strong emphasis on economic reforms like privatising some state holdings once considered strategic and granting the private sector a greater role in diversifying the oil-dominated economy.

While several successful projects have sprung from the military offset programme, others faced delays and in some cases reluctance by foreign partners to get involved in what appeared to be "white elephants," experts said.

Financial Markets

Jordan Times in co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank

Eurocurrency Interest Rates					
Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS	
U.S. Dollar	5.62	5.62	5.62	5.62	
Sterling Pound	6.50	6.50	6.62	6.68	
Deutsche Mark	4.06	4.06	4.06	4.06	
Swiss Franc	2.68	2.68	2.62	2.68	
French Franc	5.56	5.56	5.56	5.56	
Japanese Yen	0.65	0.55	0.52	0.58	
European Currency Unit	5.56	5.56	5.56	5.62	

Interbank bid rates for amounts exceeding U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent

Precious Metals			
Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal
Gold	581.75	7.50	Silver
			5.33
			0.120

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Date: 31/8/1995		
Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.7110	0.7130
Sterling Pound	1.1012	1.1067
Deutsche Mark	0.4830	0.4854
Swiss Franc	0.5882	0.5911
French Franc	0.1405	0.1412
Japanese Yen	0.7285	0.7321
Dutch Guilder	0.4311	0.4333
Swedish Krona	*****	*****
Italian Lira	0.0436	0.0440
Belgian Franc	*****	*****

Per 100

Date: 31/8/1995		
Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.8720	1.8870
Lebanese Lira	0.042680	0.043880
Saudi Riyal	0.1893	0.1908
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.2950	2.3370
Qatari Riyal	0.1941	0.1955
Egyptian Pound	0.2000	0.2180
Omani Rial	1.8477	1.8500
UAE Dirham	0.1930	0.1941
Greek Drachma	0.2810	0.3310
Cypriot Pound	1.5580	1.6360

Per 100

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Friday.

One U.S. dollar	1.3416/26	Canadian dollar
	1.4664/74	Deutsche marks
	1.6434/44	Dutch guilders
	1.2020/30	Swiss francs
	30.17/21	Belgian francs
	5.0560/10	French francs
	1631.6/2.6	Italian lire
	97.60/70	Japanese yen
	7.3240/40	Swedish crowns
	6.4160/10	Norwegian crowns
	5.6940/90	Danish crowns

One sterling	\$1.5512/22
One ounce of gold	\$381.85/382.25

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Agassi struggles to victory; Medvedev crashes to unranked Sargisian

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The two then battled

"My ears started ringing

to win. He will feel a little bit of the pressure, that's for

next opponent is 28th-ranked Yone Kamio of Japan, hon-

Syria's Asali wins Grand Prix in R.J. Equestrian Tournament

Over 50 participants from France, Holland, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Sweden and Jordan took part in the three-day competition.

Al Wihdat took an early lead by new recruit Munir Abu Hantash but Al Zawra' quickly equalised and scored another two goals to seal their win and almost secure qualification as they will be playing among their home fans in their upcoming match.

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Barcelona foreign legion take up their posts

MADRID (AFP) — Barcelona enter a new era on Sunday with an influx of foreign players to counter the threat of reinforced champions Real Madrid and Spanish "nearly-men" Deportivo La Corona.

A total of \$100 million changed hands in player transfers in the close-season with Barcelona the biggest spenders, splashing out \$13 million.

Robert Prosinecki, Meho Kodro and Gheorghe Popescu are the new recruits at Barcelona's Camp Nou stadium to replace Hristo Stoichkov, Romario, Ronald Koeman and Russian Igor Korneyev.

Only Romania's Gheorghe Hagi, plagued by injury last year following a superb World Cup, is still there for their opening match on Sunday at Real Valladolid.

And what does coach Johan Cruyff think of his boys?

On Croatian midfielder Prosinecki, Cruyff said: "He had a lot of success while he was young and he is going to prove he is not finished. The most important thing is the example he gives to the youngsters."

Kodro, of Bosnia-

Herzegovina, will be their no frills, out-and-out goal scorer.

"Kodro's philosophy can be summed up 'a goal is a goal,' I totally agree with that," Cruyff added.

And Romanian Popescu will be entrusted with a Koemanesque role in defence. "He has excellent defensive positioning, and often moves forward to help the strikers. People will love him," Cruyff added.

rid have an easy first match at promoted neighbours Rayo Vallecano.

Deportivo La Corona, with no trophy in their club's history but second the last two seasons, have the ambition under new Welsh coach John Toshack to trouble the Barcelona/Real Madrid monopoly — Athletic Bilbao in 1984 were the last other club to become champions.

World champion Brazilian Bebeto has signed a contract

SPANISH SOCCER

Despite the financial crisis of reigning champions Real Madrid, they still found the money to strengthen their squad.

Eager to make certain they were not one-season wonders, coach Jorge Valdano re-signed Argentinian marksman Juan Esnaider from European Cup Winners' Cup champions Real Zaragoza for 600 million pesetas (\$5 million), three times what they sold him for a year earlier.

Colombian Freddy Rincon was also drafted in despite fading powers of midfielder Michel fore restructuring in the middle of the park. Mad-

till 1997, and Toshack has brought in Russian Dmitri Radchenko and Serb Branko Milanovic. Toshack has also brought Spaniards from the big two clubs — Aitor Beguiristain from Barcelona, and Rafael Martin Vazquez from Real Madrid.

Deportivo host Valencia in their first fixture on Saturday and it will be interesting to see if they can confirm pre-season form.

After beating Real Madrid 5-1 on aggregate in the Spanish Super Cup they thrashed German league leaders Bayern Munich 7-0 in a friendly.

Oman receive Asian soccer award

KUALA LUMPUR (R) — Oman's national youth team took two of the Asian Football Confederation's (AFC) top monthly awards on Friday based on a giant-killing performance in the recent FIFA Under-17 World Championships in Ecuador.

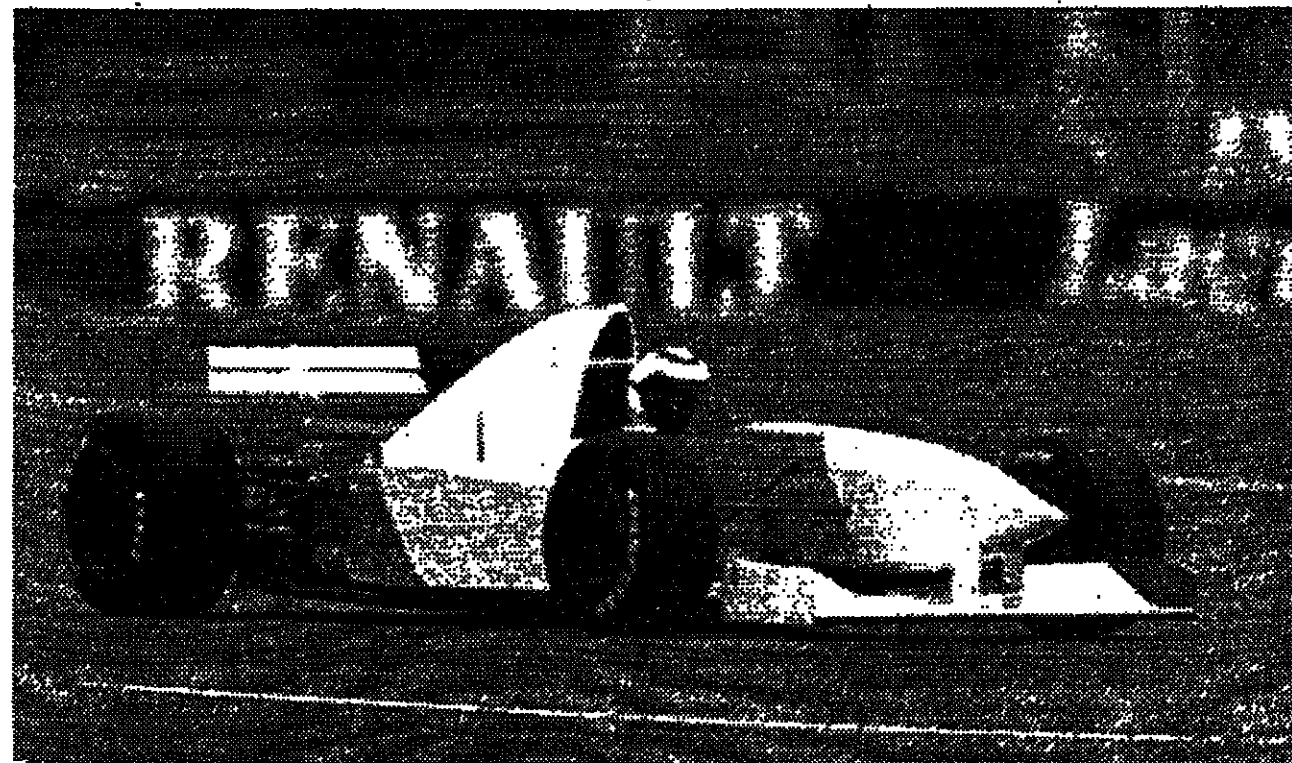
Oman won the AFC's team of the month award for August and Omani midfielder Mohamed Amor Al Kathiri was named player of the month, the 44-member regional governing body announced.

The coach of the month award was presented to South Korean Kim Kang-Nam, who steered his side to a sixth title at the Asian Schools Championships held recently in Brunei.

The Omanis stunned world football with their swift passage to the semi-finals of the FIFA tournament, beating Canada, Germany and defending champions Nigeria and drawing with Brazil.

The team lost 3-1 to eventual champions Ghana in the semifinals. "The young Omani players were a credit to their country and to Asian football, both on and off the field," said the AFC award citation.

Al Kathiri, 16, was named FIFA's player of the tournament, with a quarter of the votes cast, after finishing second among the goalscorers with five goals in six matches.



Four times world champion Alain Prost drives during a test session for McLaren at Silverstone August 31. The test was Prost's first in a Formula One car since the death of his

closest rival Ayrton Senna in the 1994 San Marino Grand Prix (Reuters photo)

Berger to leave Ferrari in 1996

LONDON (R) — Austrian veteran Gerhard Berger will leave Ferrari at the end of this year and join Frenchman Jean Alesi in an all-new driving line-up at Benetton next season.

Benetton said on Friday.

Benetton said Berger, 36 last Sunday, had signed a two-year contract.

Berger and Alesi replace defending world champion Michael Schumacher of Germany and Johnny Herbert of Britain.

Schumacher is switching teams to join Ferrari while Herbert, winner of this year's British Grand Prix, is currently without a drive for 1996. He may join the Swiss Sauber-Ford team if German Heinz-Harald Frentzen leaves.

Berger said: "It was not an easy decision to part with Ferrari after the good times I've had at Maranello. However, Benetton Formula has shown incredible performance during the last few years and has offered me the most competitive package which I believe will allow me to win races next season."

"I am also looking forward to the relaxed approach which everyone enjoys at Benetton and to teaming up again with my friend Jean."

Benetton chief Flavio Briatore said: "We are delighted to see Gerhard back with us. He won his first Grand Prix with Benetton in 1986 and we wish him many more wins next season."

Berger is the most experienced driver in Formula One motor racing this season.

He has driven in 174 Grands Prix and will celebrate his 175th race appearance in next weekend's Italian Grand Prix.

Ferrari's home race, which will witness an emotional farewell for him and Alesi from their Italian fans.

Berger has won nine races and claimed 11 pole positions, including one at last Sunday's Belgian Grand Prix, clocking the fastest race lap on 17 occasions in a colourful career.

His departure from Ferrari was a surprise to many Formula One observers as he had been with the Italian team for six years in two spells since 1987, split by three years with McLaren when he drove alongside the late Ayrton Senna.

But Berger made it clear in recent weeks he did not wish to remain at Ferrari to be a number two driver to Schumacher, whose arrival at Maranello signals he will be the central force in the team next year.

The two had a running war of words in the German and Austrian press last week and also fell out earlier this year after the Brazilian Grand Prix when Schumacher was disqualified, but later reinstated, after using irregular fuel to win.

Several drivers, including four Britons, are now in search of vacancies and will be contenders for the seat at Ferrari vacated by Berger.

These include Briton David Coulthard, who will be replaced at Williams next year by Canadian Jacques Villeneuve, Herbert, Martin Brundle, who is currently with Ligier but is known to be popular with Schumacher as a team mate, Mark Blundell, whose future with McLaren has been obscured by the recent test sessions undertaken by former world champion Alain Prost of France, and Frentzen.

The McLaren line-up has also to be finalised and two vacancies appear to exist in their proposed three-man line-up alongside Finland's Mika Hakkinen.



Toronto Blue Jays designated hitter Paul Wednesbury. Molitor attempted to score Molitor is tagged out at home plate by from third base on a fly ball to center field Cleveland Indians catcher Tony Pena by teammate John Olerud (Reuters during third inning action in Cleveland on photo)

Chinese swimmers test negative

BEIJING (AFP) — Swimming authorities said here Friday that 13 Chinese swimmers, including former world champions, had tested negative for performance-enhancing drugs.

The International Swimming Federation (FINA) conducted the tests between March 9 and June 26 on the swimmers, who included Le Jingy, Dai Gudong, Liu Limin and He Cihong. Xinhua quoted swimming chief Guo Qinglong as saying.

China first came under scrutiny after its swimmers carried off 12 of the 16 gold medals on offer at the World Championships in Rome last year.

Scandal broke out several weeks later when 11 Chinese athletes — including swimmers Lu Bin and Yang Aihua — tested positive for dope at the Asian Games.

FINA launched an investigation in March, but cleared Chinese sporting authorities of blame, as well as refuting allegations of systematic and organised doping.

Meanwhile, the Beijing Municipal Sports Commission has introduced stiffer penalties for those found to have taken drugs, the Sports Daily reported on Friday.

The commission director, Wang Jingqing, announced the sports clubs and trainers could now be fined for doping, and not just the athletes, the paper said.

Under the new law, guilty athletes will now have to pay a fine of 10,000 yuan (\$1,200) and the cost of 10 drug tests (about \$1,700).

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NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
1 4 3 2 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
Pass 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
Pass 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
Pass 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Q. 4 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
AKQ10762 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
The bidding has proceeded:
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1 4 3 2 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
Pass 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
Pass 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
Pass 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

spare. With partner short in spades but long in hearts, your chances for game are practically nil. Since you are going to take four or five tricks in your own hand, pass and hope the penalty will be substantial.

Q. 5 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:
AKQ10762 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
The bidding has proceeded:
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1 4 3 2 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
Pass 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
Pass 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
Pass 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST

The United Nations Relief & Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East is recruiting at its headquarters in Amman:

Deputy Chief Programme Planning & Evaluation Office, Grade 18 (VN # HQ(A) 39/95). Fixed term three years (extendable).

(Monthly take home pay about JD 813 plus dependency allowance; plus monthly provident fund JD165 payable at end of service; compulsory medical insurance).

Duties: A) Assists Chief, Programme Planning & Evaluation Office in coordinating the development of Agency plans and policies governing the operation of its education, health and relief programmes and the finance, staffing, supply, construction and other administrative services required to support these programmes, including: (1) reviewing existing plans and policies in relation to priorities outlined in latest financial plan; (2) liaising with Headquarters staff from various departments and field staff to determine problems or shortcomings in existing or proposed plans and policies as perceived from an operational point of view; (3) collating and documenting detailed plans covering operational requirements for field offices.

B) Assists in the establishment and review of performance indicators and other evaluation criteria for Agency programme plans and policies, including: (1) reviewing latest developments in the areas of operations research, cost effectiveness and business management and incorporating such developments into Agency criteria wherever relevant; (2) Working with Data Processing Division to develop changes to performance indicators and evaluation criteria.

C) Conducts organisational procedural, work measurement and cost effectiveness studies to ensure cost effective and efficient operations of a wide variety of large-scale education, health and relief programmes administered by the Agency, including: (1) review of current, and past operating budgets to determine expenditure trends; (2) preparation of comparative analysis of programme costs in the different fields of operation in relation to services delivered, staff complements, and other relevant considerations; (3) identification of problems or issues requiring further study; (4) development of terms of reference for studies in consultation with Chief, Programme Planning & Evaluation Office; (5) development of a procedural outline for studies, including methodologies to be employed in analysing data gathered; (6) assignment of specific areas of study to Programme Analysts 'A' and 'B', and review of their work results and proposals; (7) analysis of information and data collected; (8) preparation and presentation of reports, including recommendations for changes to Agency operational programmes.

D) Assists in implementing agreed recommendations to improve efficiency.

E) Shares the administrative work of the Programme Planning and Evaluation Office with, and acts for, the Chief, Programme Planning and Evaluation, in his absence.

Qualifications required: University degree at the post-graduate level in economics, statistics, management science, business studies, operations research or a closely related field.

Experience: Eight years in a responsible position, including four years in a supervisory capacity of progressive experience and three years, in a large international, governmental or commercial organisation involving corporate planning, operations research, organisational analysis, work study and related functions; Excellent command of written & spoken English and Arabic.

Desirable qualifications: 1. Academic training or experience in economics, education, health or welfare.

2. Experience in management consulting in developing and staff training experience.

3. Working knowledge of spoken and written French and data processing. Candidates are requested to submit a detailed UNRWA Personal History Form not later than 15 September 1995 to:

The Office of the Coordinator UNRWA Headquarters Amman P.O. Box 140157 (Wadi Seer) Amman 11814 Jordan

Full consideration will be given to disabled candidates whose disability does not mitigate against the effective performance of the duties of the job. UNRWA welcomes applications equally from men and women. Priority will be given to fully qualified registered Palestinians.

NEWS IN BRIEF

U.S. navy impounds tanker with Iraqi oil

BAHRAIN (AP) — U.S. Navy ships enforcing a U.N. embargo of Iraq have impounded a tanker suspected of trying to smuggle Iraqi oil, a spokesman said Friday. T. McCreary, spokesman of the U.S. Navy's fifth fleet, said the Saint Vincent-flagged Fair Sky was "turned over to a friendly nation in the region, which will determine its disposition along with the U.N. sanctions committee." He did not name the country to which the vessel had been diverted, or its original destination. Commander McCreary said the Fair Sky "came out of Iraqi waters and was believed to be carrying Iraqi diesel" when it was intercepted by U.S. navy sailors in mid-August. He said the navy had gathered "substantial evidence" that the tanker was carrying Iraqi oil before impounding it. There are fewer ships trying to bust the sanctions because of strict enforcement by the multinational U.N. maritime interception operation, said spokesman McCreary, whose fleet is part of that team. He said the Fair Sky was the first ship caught since May. "Last October we caught seven," he said.

Conflicting court rulings on 'The Emigrant'

CAIRO (AP) — Two courts have issued conflicting rulings on the controversial film "The Emigrant" in cases that have come to symbolize the tug-of-war over freedom of expression in Egypt. One Cairo court ruled late Thursday that the film by Egyptian director Youssef Shahin should be banned, overturning a previous ruling that allowed the movie to be played in local theatres. A second court tossed out another case calling for a ban, saying it was up to the Ministry of Culture to decide if the film can be shown. The rulings are largely academic, since the film has finished its run in Cairo. But they could affect future showings as well as video cassette sales. "The Emigrant" tells the story of Ram, whose brothers drive him into exile. He travels to Egypt to learn agriculture, but gets entangled in the intrigue of a pharaonic household before he returns home. Conservative Muslims and Christians charged that the film depicted the life of the biblical Joseph and was an affront to their religious beliefs. Mr. Shahin denies this.

Bomb explodes in Istanbul, injuring waiter

ISTANBUL (AP) — A bomb placed under a table in a restaurant here exploded early Friday after closing time and injured a waiter, police said. The bomb went off in the restaurant in a low-income neighbourhood at around 2:45 a.m., shattering windows and damaging tables and chairs, the police said. A 13-year-old waiter who slept in the restaurant was lightly injured. No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack. But various underground groups, including Kurdish guerrillas, leftist groups and Islamic militants have been active in this metropolis of 12 million for years.

Watchdog slams attack on Lebanon press freedom

BEIRUT (AFP) — An international watchdog has slammed prison sentences imposed on three journalists by a Lebanese court, saying they posed a threat to press freedom in the country. The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) also said the sentences passed in June against Hassan Sabra, Ghazi Al Maqbur and Yusef Howayek were a violation of human rights. Mr. Sabra and Mr. Maqbur, the publisher and managing director of the pro-Syrian As Shiraa magazine, were sentenced to one month in prison each on June 28 by the publications court. They were accused of publishing on Nov. 25, 1991 an editorial called "Reform or Resign" which the court said was damaging to the head of state. Both have appealed and have not yet been jailed. Mr. Howayek of the opposition Al Diyar newspaper was sentenced three months on June 26 when the court found he had slandered a member of the parliament by suggesting he was involved in drug trafficking.

'Very fruitful' talks between Manila and Musa

DURBAN (AFP) — South African President Nelson Mandela on Friday described as "very fruitful" talks with Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa at King's House, the president's official residence in the port city of Durban. Mr. Mandela said Egypt was noted as one of the most important countries in Africa and one with which South Africa aimed to maintain good bilateral relations. It is in South Africa's "interests" to keep a consolidated relation with the Egyptians "because they have the advantage of moving in the three important circles: the African, Muslim and Arab worlds." "Undoubtedly a country like that is of importance to the entire continent of Africa," South African Foreign Affairs Minister Alfred Nzo, who attended the meeting, said he was travelling to the Middle East later this month to observe the second round of the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, in which Cairo has played an important role.

Algerian, Portuguese win Qadhafi prize

PARIS (R) — Former Algerian President Ahmad Ben Bella and Portugal's ex-President Francisco Da Costa Gomes have received the "Qadhafi" Prize for Human Rights in Libya's capital Tripoli, the official Libyan news agency JANA said on Friday. JANA said Mr. Ben Bella and Da Costa Gomes received the prize at a ceremony to mark the 26th anniversary of Colonel Qadhafi's accession to power. The agency said Mr. Ben Bella, 79, got the prize for his role in Algeria's independence fight against France, and Mr. Da Costa Gomes, 81, for his role in overthrowing Portugal's military dictatorship in 1974. The prize is worth \$250,000.

Cyprus loses world-renowned healer

NICOSIA (AFP) — The Magus of Strovolos, spiritual healer Stelios Attehlis who attracted followers from around the world, has died of a brain hemorrhage at the age of 82. Also known as Daskalos (teacher in Greek), he held classes in the Strovolos suburb of the Cypriot capital twice a week and healing sessions on Thursday. His courses were attended by groups from Switzerland and from as far afield as South America, but Daskalos never accepted money for his classes nor sought publicity. He preached a mixture of Christianity and eastern mysticism, with a strong emphasis on reincarnation. Daskalos' teachings will live on in the videos and tapes made of the sessions in the back garden of a Strovolos house, as well as in the work of his daughter, Antheis, whether you believed in his powers or not. "One of the island's most fascinating personalities," said an old friend, journalist Andreas Hadjiapapas. The retired civil servant and former friend of the island's political and religious leader Archbishop Makarios had been in a coma for several months and died last Sunday. The book "The Magus of Strovolos" by Kyriakos Markides, spread his reputation around the world.

3 Pakistanis beheaded in Mecca

RIYADH (AP) — Three Pakistani men convicted of heroin trafficking were executed Friday in Mecca, the state-run Saudi radio reported. Executions are usually carried out at a public square near a mosque after midday prayers. But in recent months, they have been also taking place on other days as well, amid a sharp increase in the number of beheadings that has raised protests from human rights organisations. Last month Turkey protested the execution of four Turks for drug smuggling and appealed for clemency for some 20 others awaiting execution. The Saudis have indicated they will continue their policy of beheading narcotics traffickers. Some 140 people, mostly Asian and African drug smugglers, have been beheaded so far this year in Saudi Arabia. That is about three times the number executed in all of 1994.



Rescuers view the wreckage of a booby-trapped vehicle that went off in the crowded Ounouri Square in Algeria's Bab Al Oued neighborhood on Thursday (AFP photo)

Assad cannot be scared into peace — Mubarak

TEL AVIV (Agencies) —

Israel must not try to pressure Syria into concessions in

Mideast peace talks by raising

the "spectre" of a hard-

liners' victory in Israel's 1996

elections, Egyptian President

Hosni Mubarak said in an

interview published Friday.

Such attempts to speed up

the stalled negotiations

would only backfire, Mr.

Mubarak told the Maariv daily.

Syrian President Hafez Al

Assad would rather stick with

continued Israeli control over

the Golan Heights than

negotiate a withdrawal in

stages which he fears might

be frozen if Israel's hawkish

Likud Party comes to power,

Mr. Mubarak said.

"Don't scare Assad with

the spectre of the Likud,"

Mr. Mubarak said. "Assad

would prefer to let the whole

thing drop so that he could

face his own people without

apprehension."

"Likud opposes giving back

any part of the Golan."

Israeli officials have said a

peace treaty with Syria would

have to be concluded by the

end of the year, before Prime

Minister Yitzhak Rabin be-

gins his reelection campaign

and has little room for mak-

ing concessions on the Golan.

In a rare comment on

Israeli politics, Mr. Mubarak

suggested that he favoured a

Rabin victory.

"My God, I hope peace

comes before the Likud comes

to power," Mr. Mubarak

told Israel TV's Channel 2.

Mr. Mubarak predecessor,

Anwar Sadat, signed a peace

treaty in 1979 with Likud's

Menachem Begin.

Mr. Mubarak said Friday

that Begin, though stubborn,

"showed flexibility and an

ability to make a decision."

However, all peace efforts

were frozen when Begin was

succeeded by Yitzhak Sha-

mir.

Concerning Syria, Mr.

Mubarak said Israel should

drop a demand to establish

an early warning station on

the Golan after an Israeli

troop withdrawal. In Damas-

cus, the Israeli demand is

seen as an attempt to "per-

petuate the occupation," Mr.

Mubarak told Maariv.

The Israel-Syria negotia-

tions have been stalled for

weeks, with Syria refusing to

renew talks of military ex-

perts from both sides about

Golan security arrangements

after an Israeli pullback.

Maariv said Syria would

only agree to a resumption of

talks if Israel dropped a de-

mand for an early warning

station on the Golan.

However, Mr. Rabin

apparently has resigned him-

self to a stalemate and is not

willing to make any conces-

sions to the Syrians, the

Haaretz daily said Friday.

Mr. Rabin refuses to per-

mit the renewal of meetings

between the two countries'

ambassadors until the mili-

tary talks are back on track,

Haaretz said.

Mr. Mubarak also advised

Israeli Foreign Minister Shi-

mon Peres to keep his opti-

mistic dream of a new

Middle East to himself.

Maariv quoted Mr. Mubarak

as telling his correspondent

in Egypt that such talk raised

fears among Arabs that Israel

wants "a new Middle East to

dominate us."

Mr. Peres often uses the

phrase in speeches to de-

scribe his vision of a thriving

region at peace and even

published a book by that

name in 1993 after signing

Israel's peace deal with the

Palestine Liberation Organi-

sation (PLO).

Mr. Mubarak said: "Ex-

plain to me, what is a new

Middle East? If it's peace and

cooperation, that's ok. But

people say Israel wants to be

the strongest state in the re-

gion and control the econ-

omy."

"Talk like this makes all

the countries in the region

afraid. The mutual trust gets

lost," he said.

"Maybe you'll keep these

ideas a bit to yourselves and

not try to accelerate the

peace? It's better to build

trust rather than sow doubts

about the future," Mr.

Mubarak advised.

The U.S. State Depart-

ment meanwhile confirmed

that Washington had warned

Syria that it will be held

responsible for Palestinian

threats against U.S. citizens

and property.

Spokesman Nicholas Burns

confirmed a report in the

Washington Post Wednesday

revealing that Secretary of

State Warren Christopher

had earlier this month asked

the U.S. ambassador in

Damascus to convey the mes-

sage to the Syrians.

"We are confident that the

message referred to in the

newspaper article this morn-

ing has been received and

understood by a variety of

parties," Mr. Burns said.

"I'm not going to get into

the details of our diplomatic

exchanges, especially when a

major newspaper has been

able to produce a diplomatic

message that was not in-

tended to ... appear in that

major newspaper," Mr.

Burns said.

But I can say this — that

we take very seriously any

potential threat to American

citizens anywhere. And we

consider it important that any

individual or group that may

be tempted to take such ac-

tions understand fully the

consequences of doing so,"

he said.

League to monitor Algerian elections

CAIRO (Agencies) — Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Meguid will go to Algeria next week to discuss the league's participation in the supervision of upcoming presidential elections there, an official said Friday.

"It will be the first time that the Arab League has participated in the supervision of presidential elections," a league official said.

The Algerian government has also asked the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to participate in the monitoring of the presidential election, scheduled for Nov. 16.

Dr. Abdul Meguid will begin a three-day visit to Algeria on Tuesday and meet with Algerian President Lamine Zeroual and other senior officials.

The league official added the organisation had been asked by the Algerian government in July to help monitor the elections. The Arab League accepted "out of its concern to consolidate the constitutional legality in that country."

Algerian leaders pledged Friday to press ahead with presidential elections despite an escalating campaign of violence by militants who have vowed to stop the poll.

A suicide bomber struck Thursday in Algiers killing at least nine people and wounding more than 100 in an attack on the national police headquarters.

It was the latest in a rash of

attacks which have left a trail of carnage in Algeria as militants step up their fight against the country's military-backed government.

Algerian Radio said Friday two men drove a car packed with 100 kilograms of explosives towards the direction Generale de la Surete Nationale in the capital's Mohammad Ounouri square.

But police fired at them and threw a grenade, forcing them to change direction towards the Lycee Abdul Kader school.

The bomb later went off in the Muslim fundamentalist stronghold of Bab Al Oued, killing nine people and wounding 104.

The final circumstances of the explosion were not clear. It was not clear if the men themselves detonated the bomb, or if they were among the nine killed.

The Algerian state-run radio on Friday quoted health authorities as saying that 88 of the wounded have gone home after being treated at hospitals.

President Zeroual, who rushed to the scene immediately after the attack, blamed "terrorists."

The attack was the latest in a growing number of car-bombs blamed by the authorities on Islamic fundamentalists.

More than 30,000 people are estimated to have been killed in violence during the country's three-year old civil strife.

Ethiopia says Sudan refusing to hand over Mubarak assailants

ADDIS ABABA (R) — Ethiopia on Friday accused the Sudanese government of sheltering three Egyptian gunmen wanted for attempting to assassinate Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in June and announced a series of measures against Khartoum.

A Foreign Ministry statement said the Khartoum government was sheltering Egyptians Mustafa Hamza, Izzat Yassin and Hussein Ahmad, alias Siraji, who left Ethiopia after the assassination attempt on June 26.

Mr. Mubarak escaped unhurt when gunmen fired on his limousine as he arrived for an Organisation of African Unity summit. Friday's statement was the first time Ethiopia had linked Khartoum to the attack.

The statement said the

government had ordered that all non-governmental aid organisations linked to Sudan must cease operations and their Sudanese staff should leave within a week.

It said the government also ordered the closure of the Sudanese consulate in Gambella, western Ethiopia, and banned the national carrier Sudan Airways from flying to Addis Ababa from Friday.

It added Ethiopia had ordered that the number of Sudanese diplomats at their embassy in Addis Ababa should not exceed four and any others had to leave the country within a week.

Ethiopia also said it had decided to cut the number of its diplomats in Khartoum and had barred the national carrier Ethiopian Airlines from flying to the Sudanese capital from Friday.

32% of settlers ready to move in return for compensation -- poll

The Jerusalem Post

THIRTY-TWO per cent of settlers would be willing to leave their communities if offered "reasonable" compensation, while 26 per cent would stay in the settlements under any conditions, according to a Modi'in Ezrah survey commissioned by Peace Now.

The telephone survey, which studied settler attitudes toward their future, the peace process, and whether they would be willing to move, was conducted on August 17 among a representative sample of 419 Jews in the territories. The margin of error is 4.9 per cent.

Asked "if you would be willing to leave the settlement with your family for reasonable compensation," 15 per cent said they would "surely" be willing, and another 17 per cent said they "think they would." By contrast, 59 per cent said either they would surely not, or do not think they would be willing to leave for compensation.

The rest were either undecided or refused to answer. The poll found that willingness to leave is greater the further the settlements are from Jerusalem. In places such as Ariel, Emmanuel, Alfei Menashe, and Kiryat Arba.

Dr. Ella Heller, who carried out the survey, wrote that the settlers can be divided into 30 per cent who are considered "soft," whose motivations for moving to the territories were not ideological, and who would be willing to leave, and a hard core of 31 per cent who are ideologically motivated and will not be willing to leave for compensation. Everyone else falls somewhere in between.

Asked what they would do

"if your settlement will not be included in the state's boundaries in the final agreement with the Palestinians," 26 per cent said they would stay in the settlements under any conditions. 29 per cent said they will remain if the security remains in the hands of the IDF. 25 per cent would prefer moving within the Green Line. 8 per cent would move to another settlement in the territories, less than 1 per cent said they would leave the country, and the rest were not undecided.

Among the poll's other findings: Forty-seven per cent of the settlers said they live in the territories for economic or quality of life reasons, 36 per cent for religious or nationalistic reasons, and 15 per cent for a combination of reasons. A majority